Minutes of the

# Meeting of the Executive Committee

of the

World Council of Churches

23 – 26 September 2008

Meeting held in Lübeck, Germany

These minutes have no official status until received, amended as necessary and approved by the Executive Committee at its next meeting. The official proceedings of the Executive Committee consist of a documented record of decisions taken by the Committee along with the texts of documents acted upon. The introductions to agenda items and summaries of presentations and discussions are prepared by the minute-taker for background information only, and should not be cited as part of the official proceedings of the meeting nor as such attributed to the speakers' names.

**World Council of Churches**
**150 Route de Ferney**
**P.O. Box 2100**
**CH-1211 Geneva 2**
**Switzerland**

# Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches 23-26 September 2008 Lübeck Germany

## Contents


**1 INTERACTION WITH THE LOCAL CONTEXT ..... 4**

1.1 HOSPITALITY OF THE NORTHELBIAN CHURCH AND THE EKD ..... 4
1.2 EXPOSURE VISITS ..... 4
1.3 RECEPTION WITH THE NORTHELBIAN CHURCH AND THE EKD ..... 4
1.4 RECEPTION WITH BISHOP WARTENBERG-POTTER AND DR PHILIP POTTER ..... 5

**2 MORNING PRAYER ..... 5**

**3 OPENING ACTIONS ..... 6**

3.1 CALL TO ORDER ..... 6
3.2 ROLL CALL AND SEATING OF SUBSTITUTES ..... 6
3.3 ADOPTION OF AGENDA ..... 6
3.4 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ..... 6
3.5 SHARING OF NEWS FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ..... 6
3.6 MEMBERSHIP OF SUBCOMMITTEES ..... 6

**4 GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT ..... 6**

**5 PROPOSAL TO RENAME THE LIBRARY ..... 8**

**6 PUBLIC ISSUES ..... 8**

6.1 RECENT ACTIONS ON PUBLIC ISSUES ..... 8
6.2 PROPOSED ACTIONS ON PUBLIC ISSUES ..... 8
6.3 REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ISSUES SUBCOMMITTEE ..... 9
*6.3.1 Minute on health for all ..... 9*
*6.3.2 Statement on Universal Declaration of Human Rights ..... 12*
*6.3.3 Report on genocide with regard to the Darfur crisis ..... 14*
*6.3.4 Statement on humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka ..... 20*
*6.3.5 Statement on religious violence and intolerance in India ..... 23*
*6.3.6 Other public issues ..... 25*

**7 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS ..... 26**

7.1 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS – PART I ..... 26
7.2 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS – PART II ..... 27

**8 ASSEMBLY ..... 27**

8.1 UPDATE ON THE ASSEMBLY DISCERNMENT PROCESS ..... 27

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ASSEMBLY DISCERNMENT PROCESS .....27

**9 PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON CONSENSUS AND COLLABORATION28**

9.1 PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE.....28
9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE REPORT OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE .....28

**10 FINANCE.....29**

10.1 PRELIMINARY FINANCE REPORT.....29
*10.1.1 Audited results 2007 compared with preliminary results.....29*
*10.1.2 Results to July 2008 compared with Budget 2008 & Forecast.....30*
*10.1.3 Results to July 2008 compared with Forecast 2008.....30*
*10.1.4 Balance sheet July 2008.....31*
*10.1.5 2009-10 Budget and Framework.....31*
*10.1.6 Discussion .....32*
10.2 REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE .....32
*10.2.1 Financial report 2007 .....32*
*10.2.2 KPMG management report 2007 .....32*
*10.2.3 Appointment of auditors 2008 .....33*
*10.2.4 Review of results to July 2008 and forecast 2008 .....33*
*10.2.5 Budget 2009.....34*
*10.2.6 Framework 2010 and 2011 .....35*
*10.2.7 Human resource matters .....36*
*10.2.8 Renovation of the ecumenical centre for fire safety .....36*
*10.2.9 Renovation of the main hall in the ecumenical centre.....36*
*10.2.10 Bossey facilities .....37*
*10.2.11 Income development.....38*
*10.2.12 Internal control system project.....38*
*10.2.13 Investment review.....39*
*10.2.14 Executive committee income task forces .....39*

**11 PROGRAMMES .....39**

11.1 REPORT ON PROGRAMMES .....39
11.2 REPORT OF THE PROGRAMME SUBCOMMITTEE.....39
*11.2.1 Report on programmes.....39*
*11.2.2 Programme highlights.....40*
*11.2.3 Midterm programme evaluation.....41*

**12 POSITION OF GENERAL SECRETARY.....42**

**13 SEARCH COMMITTEE.....46**

13.1 SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT.....46
13.2 JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY .....46

**14 WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND STAFF POLICY .....49**

**15 STAFFING ..... 50**

15.1 CLOSED SESSION ON STAFFING ..... 50
*15.1.1 Appointments ..... 50*
*15.1.2 Contract extension ..... 50*
*15.1.3 End of term of service ..... 50*
*15.1.4 Vacancies ..... 50*
*15.1.5 Update on staffing ..... 51*
*15.1.6 Departures ..... 52*
*15.1.7 Performance appraisals ..... 52*
*15.1.8 Limiting years of service ..... 52*
*15.1.9 Secondment of staff ..... 52*
15.2 STAFF RULES AND REGULATIONS ..... 52

**16 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS ..... 53**

16.1 NOMINATIONS TO GOVERNING AND CONSULTATIVE BODIES ..... 53
16.2 ELECTIONS AT THE NEXT ASSEMBLY ..... 53

**17 EVALUATION ..... 53**

**18 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS ..... 54**

**19 CLOSING ACTIONS ..... 54**

**20 APPENDIX I – MEMBERS PRESENT ..... 56**

**21 APPENDIX II – MEMBERSHIP OF SUBCOMMITTEES ..... 57**

**22 APPENDIX III – REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS ..... 58**

**23 APPENDIX IV – UPDATE ON THE ASSEMBLY DISCERNMENT PROCESS ..... 65**

**24 APPENDIX V – REPORT OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON CONSENSUS AND COLLABORATION ..... 70**

**25 APPENDIX VI – TOWARD A WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND STAFF POLICY ..... 76**

25.1 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ..... 76
*25.1.1 Functions of the governing bodies ..... 76*
*25.1.2 Frequency of central committee meetings ..... 77*
*25.1.3 Review of governance, accountability and staff policy ..... 78*
25.2 SUGGESTIONS FROM ECUMENICAL PARTNERS ..... 78
*25.2.1 Two questions addressed to the Council ..... 78*
*25.2.2 A proposal from ecumenical partners ..... 79*
25.3 SUGGESTED ACTIONS ..... 79

# 1 Interaction with the Local Context

## 1.1 Hospitality of the Northelbian Church and the EKD

The executive committee was hosted for its meeting by the Northelbian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). The Bishop and Chairman of the Board of the Northelbian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bishop Dr Hans Christian Knuth, extended his warm welcome to the members of the executive committee. Staff and volunteers from the Northelbian Church and the EKD cooperated to ensure that the venue and context of the meeting were deeply enriching to the members of the committee.

## 1.2 Exposure visits

On 21-22 September 2008, members of the executive committee and World Council of Churches staff participated in exposure visits to experience the life and witness of the churches of northern Germany and bring greetings from their respective churches.

One group visited the former East Germany, where they interacted with the churches of Mecklenburg and Pomerania, visiting St Nicolas Church in Wismar, Ufergemeinde congregation in Rostock, the Weidendom "living cathedral" in Rostock, the Christian Community School in Stralsund, the Bible Centre in Barth, the Institute for Research on Congregational Development and Evangelization in Greifswald, and the head office of the Pomeranian Church, where they were received by Bishop Dr Hans-Jürgen Abromeit.

Those executive committee members who did not travel to the east attended the Sunday morning service at the Lübeck Cathedral, where Bishop Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter presided. The service was followed by a lunch provided by the church.

After the lunch, some members visited the church district of Plön, where they experienced rural life with presentations, ecumenical activities and traditional food. The rest of the members were given a guided walk through the Hanseatic City of Lübeck.

On the following day, one group visited church and diaconal institutions in and around Lübeck, including the Lübeck City Church of St Petri, the Vorwerker-Diakonie, and the House of Cultures. Another group visited churches and institutions in the church district of Neumünster and Lübeck, focusing on social and human rights, migration, and the situation of fugitives/asylum seekers. The third group was exposed to the ecumenical and social situation of Hamburg, including the Orthodox Churches in Hamburg, the Larentius community, and the churches' projects in response to new developments in the city.

## 1.3 Reception with the Northelbian Church and the EKD

On Tuesday 23 September the executive committee and World Council of Churches staff were graciously hosted at a reception in St Petri Church, Lübeck. Bishop Dr Hans Christian Knuth, Bishop and Chairman of the Church Board of the Northelbian Church, Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber, Chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, and Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, addressed the audience. Bishop Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter greeted the guests and Bishop Maria Jepsen led the evening prayer.

### 1.4 Reception with Bishop Wartenberg-Potter and Dr Philip Potter

On Thursday 25 September the executive committee hosted a private reception in honour of Bishop Bärbel Wartenberg-Potter and Dr Philip Potter. In a warm and collegial atmosphere, executive committee members reminisced about their experiences of Dr Potter and the ways his leadership had touched their lives. Rev. Dr Walter Altmann presented the resolution of the executive committee to rename the library at the ecumenical centre in honour of Dr Potter. Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia presented gifts to both Philip and Bärbel, who in turn expressed their warm gratitude to the executive committee and to the World Council of Churches for the years of ministry and friendship together.

## 2 Morning Prayer

The executive committee joined with local churches in Lübeck for prayer each morning during its meetings.

On Tuesday 23 September, the committee walked to the historic church of St Jakobi, Evangelical Lutheran Church, where the morning prayer engaged the theme of "Discerning the signs of the times" (Psalm 8 and Mark 13:24-31). Bishop Dr Martin Schindehütte shared in his message that "I have come from the spring," speaking of his recent trip to southern Africa where he witnessed the Spirit springing forth in the lives of people. His stories and images of hope were offered as signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

On Wednesday 24 September, the committee walked to the Evangelical Reformed Church where they were welcomed by the pastor, who shared that the Reformed community in Lübeck was founded by Dutch merchants, later joined by Huguenots, and was a centre for Christian resistance to National Socialism. The theme of the morning prayer was "God call us to have peace with the earth" (Leviticus 26:1-12). Ms Jung Hae-Sun shared a message emerging from images of water, recalling the Porto Alegre statement on water, reminding the congregation that human creation and natural creation are one, and evoking the image of nature as the parent who gives life to its children.

On Thursday 25 September the committee was bussed to the Evangelical Methodist Church, where the pastor shared about the importance of Methodist work to help resettle refugees in Lübeck after the second world war. The theme of the morning prayer was "With God is the fountain of life" (Ezekiel 47:1,6-12). Rev Sanele Faasua Lavatai shared a message about the river of life, the healing waters. He mentioned the vulnerability of the Pacific Islands to the consequences of climate change, in contrast to the river of life, and emphasized the need to focus on the source of our faith in Jesus Christ who can transform us to bear fruit and to become leaves for the healing of communities and nations.

On Friday 26 September the committee held morning prayer in the meeting hall. The theme was "One God, One Faith, One Baptism" (Psalm 104 and Mark 1:1-8). Metr. Dr Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos shared in his message how baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is interrelated with the creation narrative and with the visible and invisible aspects of creation. He asked whether our baptism with water helps us better understand our responsibility in creation, and called us to remember the baptism of repentance, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

# 3 Opening Actions

## 3.1 Call to order

The executive committee met in decision session. Rev. Dr Walter Altmann, moderator of the World Council of Churches, called the executive committee to order at 9:25 am on 23 September 2008 and welcomed the members of the executive committee. He thanked the host church for their gracious hospitality and especially for the various exposure visits over the last two days, and expressed his prayerful hope for our fruitful discernment during the days ahead.

## 3.2 Roll call and seating of substitutes

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, called the roll of members present. Apologies were received from two members, and the moderator asked the committee to seat substitutes as follows:

Bishop Nareg Alemezian, for Metr Bishoy of Damiette

Fr Mikhail Gundiaev, for Bishop Dr Hilarion Alfeyev

The committee approved these substitutions by consensus, and the moderator declared the meeting to be properly seated with a quorum.

## 3.3 Adoption of agenda

The agenda was presented by the general secretary, and adopted by consensus. As a general comment, executive committee members expressed the hope that previous minutes, and documents for the present meeting, be circulated in good time to allow for broader consultation within the churches.

## 3.4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the February 2008 meeting of the executive committee were presented by the general secretary.

No corrections being offered, the minutes were approved by consensus.

## 3.5 Sharing of news from executive committee members

The moderator invited sharing from those present of joys and sorrows from the ecumenical community since our last meeting.

## 3.6 Membership of subcommittees

H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima reviewed the membership of the subcommittees (see Appendix II), which were confirmed by the executive committee.

# 4 General Secretary's Report

The executive committee met in hearing session. Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, general secretary, presented a summary of his written report to the executive committee. He indicated that his letter to the central committee in July was a comprehensive review of

activities from February until that time, and that his present report does not repeat this material.

He reviewed his official travel since July, including the recent conference on Christian understandings of the "Promised Land," his presence at the Lambeth Conference, and his visit to the churches of the Pacific region. He noted that the Pacific is our least-visited region, and that the solidarity of the ecumenical community with the churches of that part of the world is extremely important.

The general secretary reported that he had been invited to lead a series of bible studies on reconciliation and healing in his home country of Kenya, as the churches there reflect on their role in society in light of the post-election violence earlier this year. He also noted the significant event in the life of the Orthodox churches, celebrating the 1020th anniversary of the Baptism of Kyivan Rus, which brought together members of the Orthodox family in very positive ways.

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia noted the initiative of the Protestant churches in Colombia to cooperate with the World Council of Churches through the DOV in order to intensify their witness for peace in Colombia.

As requested, the general secretary reported on progress in cooperation between the US and UN offices in the World Council of Churches, both located in New York City. The two offices have deepened their cooperative style of work, and can be commended for their efforts in response to the concern of the governing bodies.

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia shared some remarks on the possibility of honouring in a more intentional way the contributions of individuals to the ecumenical movement throughout its history. As a first step, it is proposed that the library at the ecumenical centre be renamed in honour of Dr Philip Potter, the third general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

Regarding discussions with member churches on secondment of specialized staff, he noted several encouraging developments. The Church of Greece is in process of seconding a staff member to work on issues of disabilities, while the Methodist Church of Korea is also in process of seconding a staff member. The Dutch Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO) has funded a three-year position to work on raising support from foundations. The Church of Sweden has seconded a staff member to work in the Jerusalem Interchurch Centre.

The general secretary shared comments on the Council's accompaniment of churches in situations of conflict, including the recent visit to Russia and Georgia. He then concluded his report with remarks on the new Christian-Muslim Women's Network, which emerged from a meeting in Tehran last year and was followed up by a second meeting in Sweden just this month. The Network will undertake dialogue, case studies and a focus on HIV and Aids in Iran.

In response to the substantive report of the general secretary, members of the executive committee asked for further information on the search for a venue for the next assembly; the participation of the various regions in the Christian-Muslim Women's Network; the status of the proposed Memorandum of Agreement with the US Conference; and progress on relations with the Pentecostal churches.

The general secretary provided helpful clarification in each of these matters. The executive committee received the report of the general secretary with appreciation.

## 5 Proposal to Rename the Library

The executive committee received the proposal from the general secretary to rename the library at the ecumenical centre in honour of Dr Philip Potter. The executive committee moved into a decision session, and approved the proposal by consensus. It was noted that in future, naming opportunities can usefully be linked to the fundraising strategies of the Council.

## 6 Public Issues

### 6.1 Recent actions on public issues

The executive committee met in hearing session. Rev. Elenora Giddings-Ivory, director of the public issues work of the World Council of Churches, presented a report on activities since the last meeting of the central committee. This report was received by the executive committee with gratitude.

### 6.2 Proposed actions on public issues

Rev. Giddings-Ivory and her colleagues Ms Christina Papazoglou and Dr Mathews George presented the proposed actions on public issues at this meeting. The following items have been prepared in advance:

- Minute on the 30th anniversary of the Alma Ata Declaration on "health for all"
- Statement on the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Statement on the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka
- Statement on the global food crisis
- Report on the study of "genocide" with regard to the Darfur crisis

Ms Papazoglou noted that the discussion on "genocide" had been requested both by the 9th Assembly and by the central committee in 2006. She also presented a report on the recent ecumenical delegation to Darfur, for information. The delegation report was received by the executive committee with gratitude and with the expectation that a full report of the ecumenical visit to Sudan will be made available in due time.

The executive committee offered preliminary reactions to the material presented, and forwarded the proposed actions to the public issues subcommittee for further consideration.

The following further suggestions for actions on public issues at this meeting were offered from members of the executive committee:

- some comment on the situation of Christians in Iran, in light of the new apostasy law
- some comment on religious violence in the Indian state of Orissa

The public issues subcommittee discussed whether these items could be addressed during this session of the executive committee.

### 6.3 Report of the public issues subcommittee

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a decision session. Dr Agnes Abuom presented the recommendations of the public issues subcommittee.

### 6.3.1 Minute on health for all

The executive committee approved the following minute by consensus.

**Time for recommitment to 'health for all'**
**on the 30th anniversary of the Alma Ata Declaration**

**Background**

1. In September 1978 – thirty years ago – the *International Conference on Primary Health Care* took place in Alma Ata, USSR (Kazakhstan) and brought together 134 World Health Organization (WHO) member states, 67 United Nations organizations, specialized ministries and non-governmental organizations. They issued an urgent call to all governments, health and development workers, and the world community to protect and promote the health for all people and adopted a prophetic declaration which remains more than relevant still today. The conference strongly recognized the existence of gross inequality in the health status around the world, particularly between developed and developing countries, as unacceptable and therefore, of common concern to all countries. The promotion and protection of health for all was identified as essential to sustained economic and social development and to contributing to better quality of life and world peace. *Primary health care* was highlighted as the key to attaining this target as part of development in the spirit of social justice.
2. The churches and church-related pioneers in health have been recognized as key players in the development of the concept of primary health care.
3. Since the 19th century and for over a hundred years, medical work has been one of the main foci for Christian missionary work. Because of this, by the 1960's, thousands of Christian hospitals served the health care needs of the developing world. With the shifting in perception of health care in a rapidly changing world, the fact that more than 90% of the resources for healing ministries were devoted to curative medicine was being questioned.
4. The Tübingen I and II Consultations co-organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the German Institute for Medical Mission (DIFÄM), in 1964 and 1968 addressed many of these questions. These processes called for an integrated witness where medical work would be intentionally linked with social work, nutrition, and agricultural and community development. The participants recognized that medical care was only one component of a diversity of disciplines, all of which were necessary to promote and maintain health. This led to the formation of the Christian Medical Commission (CMC) in 1968. The CMC assisted in the reorientation of the churches' health care so that it would evolve into a

more comprehensive and community-oriented service. With CMC's close working relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva, grass-roots experience on issues of community health were channelled to the international, intergovernmental body. The churches were able to influence and provide quality experiential and experimental input into a joint study process called "Alternative approaches to meeting basic health needs of populations in developing countries" and carried out by WHO and UNICEF. The process of demystifying health care, where services are tailored to the needs of the communities with the local population being involved in the formulation of the policy and delivery of the system, led to the development of primary health care.

**Christian imperative**

5. Public health is the science and art of promoting health, preventing disease and prolonging life through organized efforts of society. Christians have played a key role in the evolution of public health from ancient to modern times. The understanding that humankind was created in the image of God and that all are equally precious to God, has contributed to providing health care to all equally (Genesis 1:27). This perspective has been further strengthened by the biblical imperative to relate to and make a difference in the lives of vulnerable persons and communities (Mathew 25:40). This approach was evident in the life of Jesus, his disciples and the saints throughout the centuries. Throughout history Christians have followed Jesus' teachings by serving whole communities during epidemics and health crises. This continues today. Ministries of health care are possible both through setting up intentional church infrastructure, but also through development and training of health professionals.

**Continuing challenges**

6. The dream of the Alma Ata conference, 'Health for All by the Year 2000' could not be achieved. The health status of the people in developing countries has not improved and in many cases it has deteriorated further. Currently, we face a global health crisis, characterized by growing inequalities within and between countries. New threats to health continue to emerge and these are compounded by negative forces of globalization which prevent the equitable distribution of resources needed to ensure health for all, and in particular for the poor. Within the health sector itself, failure to implement the principles of primary health care as set out in the Alma Ata Declaration, has significantly aggravated the global health crisis.

7. In these situations the churches, present throughout the developing world, continue their focus on providing health care and services to remote, vulnerable or impoverished communities and empowering them to take care of their own health. In addition, faith-based organizations are major health providers in most developing countries, e.g. providing about 40% of services in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite being closely aligned with community needs, faith-based organizations often go unrecognized because they usually operate outside official government processes. Evidence suggests that a range of treatment, care and prevention activities in accordance with primary health care principles is provided by faith-based organizations.

8. With attention to accountability and monitoring, governments can work with these organizations on the basis that such partnerships will deliver public value and narrow gaps in national health planning systems. At the same time, governments must be challenged to develop programmes to meet the need of health care for all as a human right. The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states in Article 12 that, "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health..." Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." The Centre for Economic and Social Rights describes the right to health to include the basic requirements of availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality.

**Recommendations**

While strongly affirming the work the churches do in primary health care, the executive committee hopes that this minute will re-energize churches in recommitting themselves to achieving health for all. The executive committee of the World Council of Churches meeting in Lübeck, Germany, from 23-26 September 2008:

A. ***Acknowledges*** the role of church-related health services, their community-based initiatives and grass roots movements, e.g. people's health movements, to sustain and strengthen the primary health care approach;

B. ***Affirms*** with appreciation the leadership of the World Health Organization and inspired governmental and intergovernmental bodies in reinvigorating the primary health care by placing it in the broader agenda of equity and human development by linking its renewal with efforts to strengthen health systems, promoting sustainable improvements in community participation and collaboration among different sectors of society;

C. ***Encourages*** the leadership of the churches to exercise their role as advocates so that each congregation can become part of the healing community and promote equitable and just health policies with their civic leaders;

D. ***Encourages*** the churches to reorient their medical services back to primary health care, by providing adequate training and human and material resources;

E. ***Encourages*** the churches to forge partnerships with community-based, non-governmental and faith-based organizations providing health services and local government to fortify, sustain and enhance the primary health care system at the district and community level;

F. ***Urges*** individuals and churches to advocate for better health care provisions from their governments within their own state and community and to promote health care as a human right.

### 6.3.2 Statement on Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The executive committee approved the following statement by consensus.

**Statement on the 60th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

*"The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners." (Isaiah 61:1)*

1. December 10, 2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR is the foundation of the modern human rights system, the first universal statement on the basic principles of inalienable human rights, and a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. In the words of Eleanor Roosevelt it is "*the international Magna Carta for all mankind (humankind).*"
2. The World Council of Churches, through its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, participated in the drafting of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, and contributed the text in Article 18 on freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The WCC has since been active in promoting the declaration's implementation.
3. Considerable progress has been made in the advancement and reinforcement of the human rights protection mechanisms over the last years. The establishment of the Human Rights Council and of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism could be listed among the efforts to strengthen the United Nations human rights machinery in a more democratic and transparent way. Some important human rights instruments like the Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities, the International Convention on Enforced Disappearance and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, have also been adopted. Furthermore, a draft Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which aims at establishing an individual complaint mechanism under the covenant will hopefully be adopted in the near future.
4. The prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes by the international tribunals and national courts has also been a positive step in the fight against impunity for grave human rights violations. Another recent development worth mentioning is the moratorium on the death penalty, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in late 2007.
5. These are undoubtedly very positive developments. However today, six decades after the adoption of the UDHR, human rights are continually violated or misused in pursuit of particular national, ethnic, racial, religious and ideological interests and the levels of impunity, injustice and inequality are overwhelming.
6. Millions of people are still witnessing a flagrant violation of their fundamental human rights in many countries around the world. Extensive use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, lack of protection for refugees and internally displaced persons, discriminatory policies against migrants, increasing violence

against women and children, attacks against human rights activists, attacks of civilians by armed groups and government forces, denial of economic and social rights like right to food, access to medical care and education, alarming increase of the people living in conditions of extreme poverty, are only some of the many human rights violations witnessed over the past year.

7. Furthermore, people are murdered, arrested or discriminated against for their religious beliefs. Religious minorities, women, refugees and detainees are in a particularly vulnerable situation with regard to their freedom of religion or belief. Many governments encroach on the freedom of worship and numerous places of worship are attacked by non-state actors.

8. It is evident that there is still a huge gap between words and deeds, promises and action. Certainly much has been achieved on a normative level especially in the area of standard setting and monitoring. Nonetheless, adopting and ratifying inter-governmental human rights instruments, although very important, simply does not suffice. There is a need to respect and to promote by all means both in law and in practice the full realization of the rights included in these agreements in every country around the world. Governments must defend the rights of the people that are under their jurisdiction and must show their political will to seriously tackle the grave human rights violations that occur in various parts of the world.

9. As was stated during the 5th WCC Assembly in Nairobi, 1975: "*Our concern for human rights is based on our conviction that God wills a society in which all can exercise full human rights. All human beings are created in the image of God, equal and infinitely precious in God's sight and ours. Jesus Christ has bound us to one another by his life, death and resurrection, so that what concerns one concerns us all.*"

Fully aware of the interconnection and interdependence of human rights and human dignity, the executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Lübeck, Germany, 23-26 September 2008:

A. ***Reaffirms*** its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the principles enshrined within it;

B. ***Regrets*** the huge gap which continues to exist between declarations on human rights and implementation, and the tragic human suffering this represents as a result of extensive violation of human rights;

C. ***Requests*** governments to adopt, ratify and respect international and regional instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights, to monitor compliance with them in their own countries and around the world, and to underwrite that commitment with human and financial resources;

D. ***Urges*** governments to take all necessary measures in order to guarantee the effective protection and promotion of the right to freedom of religion or belief and to challenge intolerance or discrimination based on religion or belief in society;

E. ***Calls*** on churches, through education and action, to work to promote human dignity by improving public understanding of human rights violations and of the human

rights protection mechanisms and urges member churches and their governments to cooperate with the UN and other governments and non-governmental bodies in this regard;

F. ***Commends*** the ongoing work of the churches and ecumenical organizations for the promotion and protection of human rights and urges them to continue to stress the linkages between universally accepted standards of human rights and the Christian commitment to human dignity;

G. ***Acknowledges*** human rights advocacy work to be an essential and integral component of the worldwide struggle and yearning for peace with justice and an important part of the ministry of the church.

### 6.3.3 Report on genocide with regard to the Darfur crisis

The executive committee approved the following report by consensus.

**Report of the study on genocide with regard to the Darfur crisis**

1. At its meeting in Geneva, Switzerland (30 August-6 September 2006), the WCC central committee "requested the staff to study if the use of the term 'genocide' with regard to the crisis in Darfur is appropriate in light of the internationally agreed conventions on this issue, and to offer counsel to the churches."

2. Before proceeding with a close examination of the Darfur crisis and the response of the international community to it, there is need to examine the legal definition of the term "genocide" and the particular challenges it poses.

**Analysis of the term "genocide"**

3. The word genocide was used for the first time by lawyer Raphael Lemkin, who combined the Greek word *genos* (race or tribe) with the Latin word *cide* (cidere – to massacre, kill). Following the horrors of the holocaust he campaigned to have genocide recognized as a crime under international law. His efforts gave way to the adoption of the "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide", adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948, coming into effect in January 1951. Article II of the convention offers a legal definition of the crime of genocide according to which genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. The convention also imposes a general duty on states that are signatories to "prevent and punish" genocide. The same definition was taken up later on by the statute of the two ad-hoc tribunals; e.g. the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Article 2) and the International Criminal Tribunal for ex-Yugoslavia (Article 4) and finally by the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court (Article 5).

4. Over the years the definition of genocide has been widely debated. Many have argued that it is too narrow and thus many of the mass killings perpetrated since the adoption

of the convention would not fall under it. Some of the arguments invoked in support of this point are that the convention excludes targeted political and social groups. Furthermore, the definition is limited to direct acts against people and excludes acts against the environment which sustains them. Another issue is that proving intention beyond reasonable doubt is extremely difficult. An additional question along these lines is the difficulty of defining or measuring "in part" and establishing how many deaths equal genocide. One more dimension that should be taken into consideration is the reluctance of UN member states to single out other member states or intervene.

5. What differentiates genocide from other crimes against humanity is the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Acts which are directed against those groups with a discriminatory intent but not with intent to destroy them constitute crimes against humanity and not genocide. As becomes evident, there is a very fine line between those two categories which renders qualifying a certain crime as genocide a very difficult task.

6. In order to determine whether a particular crime constitutes genocide it needs to be ascertained whether a factual case has been made out of the legal pre-requisites. It requires the gathering of concrete evidence that can prove beyond reasonable doubt the commission of such a crime. The gathering of such evidence can prove to be a very difficult task especially during on-going crises, like in the case of Darfur.

**Developments on international level with regard to the Darfur crisis**

7. In January 2005 an International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, authorized by UN Security Council resolution 1564 of 2004, issued a report to the secretary general stating that, "the government of the Sudan has not pursued a policy of genocide". Nevertheless, the Commission cautioned that, "this should not be taken in any way as detracting from the gravity of the crimes perpetrated in that region. International offences such as the crimes against humanity and war crimes that have been committed in Darfur may be no less serious and heinous than genocide". Following that, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1593 (31 March 2005) referring the ongoing conflict in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Following this, in April 2007, the ICC issued its first arrest warrants in a three-year investigation of war crimes in Darfur, Sudan, naming Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb, and Sudanese humanitarian affairs minister Ahmad Muhammed Harun, who is believed to have been one of the masterminds behind the well-reported mass killings and displacements in the region. Since the prosecutor did not find sufficient evidence to prosecute for genocide, they are being accused of 51 crimes against humanity and war crimes. Meanwhile, the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Sudan was extended for one year by the Human Rights Council during its 6th session in December 2007.

8. On 14 July 2008, ICC Prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, submitted to the judges of the pretrial chamber of the ICC an application for the issuance of an arrest warrant against Sudan's President Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir, for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

9. Three years after the Security Council requested him to investigate in Darfur, and based on the evidence collected, the prosecutor has concluded there are reasonable grounds to believe that Sudan's President Al Bashir bears criminal responsibility in relation to ten counts of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

10. According to the prosecution evidence, President Al Bashir masterminded and implemented a plan to destroy in substantial part the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa groups, on account of their ethnicity. *"Members of the three groups, historically influential in Darfur, were challenging the marginalization of the province; they engaged in a rebellion. Al Bashir failed to defeat the armed movements, so he went after the people. His motives were largely political. His alibi was a counterinsurgency. His intent was genocide*" the prosecutor said.

11. According to the evidence gathered, the prosecutor said that for over five years armed forces and the militia/Janjaweed, on President Al Bashir's orders, attacked and destroyed villages. They then pursued the survivors in the desert. Millions of civilians have been uprooted from lands they occupied for centuries, all their means of survival destroyed, their land spoiled and inhabited by new settlers. Those who reached the camps for the displaced people were subjected to conditions calculated to bring about their destruction (killings, rapes, hunger).

12. It should be noted that Sudan has not signed up to the ICC but the court has authority to act in this case because the UN Security Council gave it a mandate to do so, with resolution 1593 in March 2005. The pretrial chamber will now review and assess the evidence presented to them over the next couple of months. If the judges determine that there are reasonable grounds to believe that President Omar Al Bashir committed the alleged crimes, they will decide on the best manner to ensure his appearance in court. If the judges issue the warrant, Sudan will be obliged to arrest its own president, in effect the president handing himself over, which most likely will never happen.

13. Under Article 89, President Al Bashir might also be liable to arrest if he visits one of the 106 states that are parties to the treaty. Article 89 of the court's statute says that the court "may transit a request for the arrest and surrender of a person … to any state on the territory of which that person may be found…."

14. This is the first time that the ICC prosecutor has made charges against a sitting head of state, breaking new ground in the reduction of national sovereignty rights that have characterized international law in recent years. The real impact of this development is yet to be seen. Meanwhile, on 31 July, the Council renewed the UN African Union Mission (UNAMID) mandate for 12 months in resolution 1828. This was preceded by intense negotiations on a proposal, following a request to the ICC from its prosecutor for an arrest warrant against President Al Bashir, to include language suspending ICC proceedings under article 16 of the Rome Statute. According to this article *"No investigation or prosecution may be commenced or proceeded with under this statute for a period of 12 months after the Security Council, in a resolution adopted under chapter VII of the charter of the United Nations, has requested the court to that effect; that request may be renewed by the Council under the same conditions."* The majority resisted this proposal, but a compromise was found in emphasizing the need

to bring the perpetrators of serious crimes to justice (and the government's obligations in this respect) and also mentioning some Council members' concerns related to the request for an arrest warrant against President Al Bashir. The resolution took note of those members' intention to consider these matters further.

15. Darfur will continue to be a focus for the UN Security Council in September. In particular Council members are expected to discuss issues relating to the deployment of the UNAMID and current proceedings before the International Criminal Court (ICC). It is unclear whether any formal proposals for a suspension of proceedings against Sudan's President Omar Al Bashir before the ICC will emerge in September. A report from the sanctions panel of experts is due by 15 September.

16. It must be noted that divisions within the Council on ICC issues are expected to continue. China, Russia, South Africa, Libya, Burkina Faso and Indonesia support the suspension of ICC proceedings. Other Council members believe it is more important to safeguard legal mechanisms and to ensure accountability.

17. But recent developments on the ICC issue also seem to indicate that some of those members may be open to the possibility of an article 16 suspension of ICC proceedings for President Al Bashir. This would happen provided there are serious steps from Khartoum in improving cooperation with the ICC, including credible action against other indictees, as well as real cooperation with UNAMID's deployment, facilitating humanitarian assistance and creating genuine conditions for a peace process. (There also seems to be a perception that pressure may be required on the rebels in that regard.)

18. On the other hand the Sudanese government unveiled a reconciliation initiative for Darfur including a national dialogue conference, but as yet no dates have been officially announced. The government also appointed a prosecutor to head domestic proceedings on serious crimes in Darfur. But scepticism remains due to the timing, the lack of Sudanese legislation dealing with such crimes, and weaknesses in the Sudanese judiciary. The government reportedly continues to refuse to execute pending ICC arrest warrants for Ahmad Muhammed Harun and Ali Kushayb. Thus many seem unconvinced of Khartoum's recent efforts on domestic mechanisms for justice and accountability, being mindful of past similar initiatives that they see as lacking credibility.

19. On Darfur, the key issue is whether there is anything the Security Council can do to encourage the parties to move towards a genuine ceasefire and a peace process. Another is improving security and, in that context, determining how best to advance UNAMID's deployment.

20. Justice and accountability issues also seem likely to preoccupy members, in particular whether an appropriate balance can be found that preserves the integrity and independence of the ICC and avoids impunity, encourages Sudan's cooperation with UNAMID, improves the prospects of a ceasefire and peace process in Darfur and preserves overall stability in Sudan. In this regard, options could include:

    - adopting a wait-and-see approach on the ICC's consideration of its prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant against President Al Bashir;

- reaching an understanding with Sudan that President Al Bashir's ICC proceedings could be suspended for one year provided that there is a watertight arrangement on Sudan's cooperation with the ICC over other indictees, improved cooperation with UNAMID, and concrete steps towards a ceasefire. (A necessary measure in this regard might be to consider a spectrum of sanctions against the rebels should they refuse to cease hostilities.); and
- some other watertight arrangement that would ensure legal accountability for ICC indictees, perhaps along the lines of the Lebanon tribunal (which applies domestic law but uses international judges and a neutral location; a problem in this option is the absence of domestic legislation in Sudan incorporating the relevant international crimes).

21. If the option of domestic judicial mechanisms in substitution for the ICC is considered, important challenges would arise. In addition to issues relating to judicial capacity and independence, as already mentioned Sudan's legal system does not contain specific provisions for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.

22. Still another issue is whether the Security Council should increase its focus on the broader challenges facing Sudan, in particular whether there is anything the Council should do on the north-south situation. This includes how best to ensure progress in implementing the CPA on elections in 2009 and a southern independence referendum in 2011; demarcating the north-south border and the status of Abyei; and oil-revenue sharing.

**Closing remarks**

23. From the analysis that preceded, it becomes quite evident that genocide is a rather complex issue with not just legal but also political parameters. Genocide has legal implications, entailing full-scale intervention by the international community and therefore it cannot be treated lightly without due consideration and in-depth analysis of all different elements surrounding a given case.

24. The pursuit of justice, peace and reconciliation has been at the core of the mission of Christian churches as a response to the teaching of Jesus in the sermon on the mount: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. … Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:6-9)

25. The churches in different parts of the world, and especially in those countries which have suffered gross human rights violations, have been struggling against impunity at the national and international level. The rationale of this struggle has been not so much to seek punishment, but to overcome violence and impunity, to support victims and to pursue peace, justice and reconciliation.

26. In this work the paradigm of restorative justice has emerged as a way to stress the importance of restoring broken relationships within the communities. Through restorative justice, people begin to understand each other's vulnerability and acknowledge their humanity. Restorative justice means to restore victims, restore perpetrators and restore communities. A victim-centred approach emerges as one of

the characteristics of restorative justice procedures from the community level to the national level.

27. Churches and ecumenical organizations have always interpreted the cries of the victims as a demand to respect their rights. Victims have the right to know exactly what happened in the case of grave human rights violations. It was within this context that churches raised their prophetic voice with regard to the Armenian genocide. In 1984, WCC published a "Background Information" on "Armenia: the continuing tragedy". Following this, the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs raised the issue of the Armenian genocide in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights with reference to the latter's report of the question of Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. That "Revised and Updated Report on the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" was presented in 1985 to the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and concluded that the Armenian massacres had constituted genocide.

28. Churches should once again assume their pioneering role and raise their prophetic voice with regard to the Darfur crisis. Following the WCC ecumenical solidarity visit to Darfur and the latest developments on the international level, we believe that all the evidence is showing that the crimes committed in Darfur against non-combatant civilians fulfil the legal pre-requisites of the crime of genocide as prescribed in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

29. The conflict in Darfur enters its sixth year and constitutes a moral challenge for the international community that must no longer silence and ignore the continuous deteriorating situation of thousands of innocent people who are confronted daily with death, famine and are subjected to conditions calculated to bring about their physical destruction.

30. During the High-level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, world leaders agreed, for the first time, that states have a primary responsibility to protect their own populations and that the international community has a responsibility to act when these governments fail to protect the most vulnerable. The responsibility to protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity is an international commitment by governments to prevent and react to grave crises, wherever they may occur. This responsibility to prevent, react to and rebuild following such crises rests first and foremost with each individual state. However when states manifestly fail to protect their populations, the international community shares a collective responsibility to respond. This response should be the exercise of first peaceful, and then, if necessary, coercive, including forceful, steps to protect civilians.

31. The responsibility to protect means that no state can invoke its right to sovereignty as an excuse to avoid any kind of scrutiny from the international community while it conducts or permits widespread human rights violations to its population. Nor can states turn a blind eye either because these violations extend beyond their borders, or because proactive actions might not suit their narrowly-defined national interests. Unfortunately this has been the case with the Darfur crisis. The international

community does no longer have the right to remain a bystander and allow the perpetration of high scale atrocities, like the ones occurring in Darfur, to continue unpunished.

32. As it was stated in the **Report on the Armenian Genocide, adopted by the WCC central committee, Geneva, 15-22 February 2005** *"From the Christian perspective, the path towards justice and reconciliation requires the recognition of the crime committed as a sine qua non condition for the healing of memories and the possibility of forgiveness. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting but to look back with the intention to restore justice, the respect for human rights and relationships between perpetrators and victims."*

33. Churches should take the lead in advocating and offering their support to all efforts, national and international, that aim at pursuing justice and accountability with a view to building a long lasting peace through a truly reconciliatory process.

### 6.3.4 Statement on humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka

The executive committee approved the following statement by consensus.

**Statement on Humanitarian Crisis in Sri Lanka**

1. The civil war in Sri Lanka, which has continued for over twenty-five years, raises fresh concerns as the prospects for the resumption of the peace process have fallen apart once again. The parties to the conflict, in spite of international mediation, have not reached any agreement that would lead to the resolution of this protracted conflict. On 2 January 2008, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) withdrew from the ceasefire agreement with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE). Since then the fighting has intensified to a degree worse than it was prior to the 2002 ceasefire agreement. The intensification of the war in the northern part of the country put people under tremendous hardships. Gross violations of human rights, disappearances and killings of non-combatants are on the rise. Thousands of civilians are internally displaced and are at tremendous risk due to the fighting between the military and the LTTE in the LTTE-occupied area of Vanni. Unarmed and trapped in this war zone, thousands of civilians, including children, are caught in the crossfire. The people are under pressure from both sides of the conflict to support its respective strategy and actions. This further aggravates the people's suffering and fear. The absence of effective mechanisms to receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations contributes to the helplessness and vulnerability of the people. Although concerns about this situation have been expressed by UN agencies, the European Union and others, there has been no positive response from the government.

2. Reports from humanitarian agencies, which were operational in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, have indicated that the escalation in the fighting between the government forces and the LTTE has created a new humanitarian crisis with serious consequences for the survival of innocent civilians. Recently, the government has asked all humanitarian workers to leave the LTTE controlled region, for their own safety, as the military plans a major offensive there. The displaced civilians in Vanni and other places in the north are finding it extremely difficult to cope with the situation as they are forced to live without basic amenities. The closure of the main

highway between the north and the south of the country, coupled with government regulations, have restricted the flows of food, medical supplies, materials for temporary shelter, water and sanitation facilities to this region. The humanitarian costs of the war are increasing day by day. As the deteriorating situation of the country continues to tear apart the lives of millions of Sri Lankans, a sense of hopelessness permeates the country.

3. The protection of the rights of all its citizens and in particular of unarmed civilians, including children and the elderly, is a primary responsibility of any government even at times of war. In this context, the GoSL, a signatory to the Geneva Convention of 1949, cannot overlook its legal obligations under international humanitarian law and its moral obligation to comply with the provisions of the 1977 additional protocols. Emergency measures taken by a government should not exceed the limitations established by international law. The welfare of the civilian population must not be compromised for military exigencies. The practice of the LTTE of forcibly recruiting civilians and deploying them in civilian areas places non-combatants at the risk of being attacked by the military. This is further contributing to the increased numbers of casualties. Restrictions are placed in the path of UN agencies, other humanitarian agencies as well as of countries involved in trying to negotiate for lasting peace in Sri Lanka. As the situation in Sri Lanka worsens, the international community must urgently find ways of engaging all parties and resolve the humanitarian crisis as soon as possible. The situation in the country today warrants the immediate attention of the international community to encourage and assist the GoSL and the LTTE to resume the peace talks.

4. The churches in Sri Lanka have been playing a proactive role in peace building ever since the country slipped into this war. Interreligious initiatives taken by the Sri Lankan churches in cooperation with civil society organizations in the country have helped to mobilize people from all walks of life, including the international community, to be concerned about peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The National Christian Council in Sri Lanka, through its Commission on Justice and Peace, has been contributing significantly to peace building efforts, even at the grassroots level, in the conflict-affected areas. Sri Lankan church leaders recently urged the warring parties to invite international humanitarian agencies to set up peace zones in the conflict-affected areas. Over the years, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been accompanying the churches in Sri Lanka in their peace and reconciliation ministry. In August 2007, a Living Letters team, in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence, visited the country to express the solidarity and concern of the global ecumenical family. As part of its global advocacy initiatives, the WCC's UN Advocacy Week programme, which will be held from 17-24 November 2008 in New York, will focus on peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka as a priority concern.

5. While the worldwide ecumenical community seeks to stand in solidarity with the churches in Sri Lanka and their people, we are reminded of St. Paul's message that "we are one body, and when one part of the body suffers all suffer with it." (1 Cor.

12:26). Our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to be peacemakers and it is this calling that compels us to continue our commitment to peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Lübeck, Germany from 23-26 September 2008, therefore:

A. ***Expresses*** its deep concern about the escalation of the war and all kinds of armed violence in Sri Lanka;

B. ***Condemns*** the killings of non-combatants and all other forms of human rights violations by government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam;

C. ***Calls on*** the warring parties to adhere to international humanitarian law, the UN's guiding principles on internal displacement and other humanitarian norms; and to receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations as required by law locally and internationally;

D. ***Appeals*** to the international community to put pressure on the warring parties to respect the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law to ensure that all civilians in conflict affected regions in the country are safe from any forms of threat to their life, inhuman treatment by the armed forces of either side, taking of hostages and assaults on personal dignity;

E. ***Urges*** the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam to jointly invite and assist the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to set up peace corridors and peace zones for the safety of civilians in the war zones in the country;

F. ***Urges*** the government of Sri Lanka to provide all civilians adequate access to basic amenities for their survival, including supplies of food, water, fuel, and medicine;

G. ***Urges*** the government of Sri Lanka to provide churches, religious groups and civil society organizations access to the northern provinces in order to be engaged in humanitarian work;

H. ***Urges*** the government of Sri Lanka to provide adequate access for the media to report on the conditions of life of the people in these provinces;

I. ***Requests*** churches and the ecumenical community all over the world to support the efforts of the international community to contribute to a process for the peaceful resolution to the Sri Lankan conflict;

J. ***Commends*** the churches in the country that are working diligently and with courage to secure peace with justice, and urges the WCC member churches and the ecumenical community to uphold the people and churches of Sri Lanka in prayer;

K. ***Reiterates*** our earlier call to the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam to resume peace negotiation through international mediators.

### 6.3.5 Statement on religious violence and intolerance in India

The executive committee approved the following statement by consensus.

**Statement on Religious Violence and Intolerance in India**

*"Open your mouth for the mute,*
*For the rights of all the unfortunate.*
*Open your mouth, judge righteously,*
*And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy".*
*(Proverbs 31:8-9)*

1. Religious tolerance has been the basic tenet and hallmark of India's ancient civilization and history. For centuries, people practicing various religious faiths have lived side by side in peace. India's rich tradition of religious plurality has been a symbol of social and religious harmony. However, that situation has been changing in recent years as religious intolerance has emerged as a dominant factor in conflicts. Religious violence has increased in recent years in several parts of India. The organized violence, inhuman acts and atrocities against religious minorities were carried out with full impunity under the eyes of law enforcement authorities. The growing environment of religious intolerance and violence has already claimed many lives in India.

2. The new wave of attacks against Christians was triggered by the killing of a Hindu leader, Swami Laxanananda Saraswati, along with five other people at Tumudibandh, Kandhamal District, in Orissa on 23 August 2008. The rebellious Maoist Naxalite groups prominent in this region have admitted responsibility for the murder of Swami and his followers. In addition, the state police authorities have stated that the killing was carried out by the Maoists. However, leaders of certain fundamentalist Hindu organizations blamed Christians for these killings. Despite the condemnation expressed by Christian groups and churches at the killing of the Swami and his associates and their demand for the culprits to be caught and punished, in retaliation, the extremist Hindu organizations have engaged in a series of attacks against Christians throughout the State of Orissa. The minority Christians in Orissa have been experiencing various forms of atrocities in recent weeks including looting, destruction of churches and church-run institutions, and brutal attacks against priests, nuns, church workers and other members of the Christian community, most of whom are Dalits and Adivasis (tribals). Reports from various sources confirmed that at least fifty thousand Christians in Orissa have been displaced; hundreds of Christians have fled their homes and taken refuge in forests; many others are living in 18 relief camps, and find themselves threatened in the camps as well. The plight of the victims and survivors of this communal carnage, the fear and trauma they are experiencing, the poor and unhygienic facilities in the government-run relief camps and the inefficiency of government machinery in tackling the violence continue to be serious concerns. The upsurge of religious extremism in Orissa in recent weeks has left many Christians in Orissa virtually defenceless.

3. This new wave of organized violence against Christians, which started in Orissa, has now spread to other states such as Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. Attacks

orchestrated by Hindu extremist groups against the Christians are considered as an organized plot and just one link in a long chain of events that have continued to strain communal harmony and interreligious relations in the country. Although the attacks against Christians are interpreted as religious violence, in most circumstances the under current is based on socio-economic factors. Christians in the country have been repeatedly accused of encouraging conversion to Christianity. Various churches have been unequivocal in their official documents and statements and go on *ad nauseam* that conversion to Christianity by force or fraudulent means is strictly prohibited.

4. The violence and threats against the Christians of India is an assault on the Constitution of India. The Indian Constitution declares India to be a "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic" which secures to all citizens "justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and equality of status and opportunity." Under articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution, discrimination based on religion is prohibited. Article 25 guarantees the right to freely practice and propagate religion. In addition to these constitutional guarantees at the domestic level, India is also party to several international treaties that stipulate human rights obligations. Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Article 26 bans discrimination on the grounds of religion while Article 27 stipulates that in "those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion...." However, the rights and freedoms of the people are not merely guaranteed but also protected by various states in India. India now has seven states which have legislation banning religious conversions. The seven Indian states with anti-conversion legislation (known as the Freedom of Religion Acts) include Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. Hindu extremists commonly use anti-conversion legislation to falsely accuse Christians of converting people through force or allurement, thus justifying subsequent attacks on Christians. They also deflect prosecution away from themselves by pressing charges of "forcible conversion" without any evidence.

5. The churches and Christian leaders in India have been making considerable efforts to appeal to people to strive for peace and reconciliation. The call given by the Untied Christian Forum comprised of the National Council of Churches in India, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India and the Evangelical Fellowship of India to observe a Day of Prayer and Fasting for Peace and Reconciliation was very well received by Christians all over the country. People at large have appreciated the efforts by various churches to promote and restore trust and goodwill among people of all religions and communities. The church leaders in the country appealed to all members of the Christian community in the country to work for the welfare of all sections of people in society in spite of such horrendous experiences of violence and death of some members of the community. The World Council of Churches is deeply disturbed by these developments of religious violence in Orissa and has expressed its concern in a letter by the general secretary addressed to the Prime Minister of India. A pastoral letter from WCC general secretary expressing sympathy and solidarity to suffering

Christians in Orissa was sent to WCC member churches in India and the National Council of Churches in India.

6. As the growing religious extremism and increasing violence against religious minorities in India is putting the secular credibility of India at risk, all religious groups in India have the responsibility to desist from spreading communal hatred. People should be reminded of the value and guiding principle in life: "Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour's life." (Leviticus 19:16).

The executive committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Lübeck, Germany from 23-26 September 2008, therefore:

A. ***Expresses*** its concern about the alarming trend of growing communal violence and religious intolerance in India;

B. ***Expresses*** its concern about the organized violence and atrocities against Christians in Orissa and other parts of India;

C. ***Appeals*** to the central and state governments to take necessary measures to bring back hundreds of tribal and Dalit Christian villagers in Kandhmal, Orissa who are still hiding for their lives in forests;

D. ***Urges*** the government of India to take steps to prevent violence and harassment against the Christian minorities in Orissa and other parts of the country and to take appropriate actions against actors responsible for attacks;

E. ***Urges*** the Orissa government to take immediate steps to rehabilitate the victims in their own villages and provide compensation and grants for them to rebuild their houses;

F. ***Appeals*** to the government, civil society organizations, religious groups and political parties to initiate confidence-building measures to restore mutual trust, peace and reconciliation among people of different faiths in affected areas;

G. ***Supports*** the initiatives taken by churches in India to ensure peace and reconciliation in spite of their struggle, pain and agony;

H. ***Commends*** the role played by church leaders at various levels, especially their readiness to be engaged in dialogue with other religious leaders and the appeal made to Christians to restrain from any retaliation;

I. ***Urges*** the government authorities in India to meet their constitutional obligations to ensure that religious minorities may equally enjoy freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and adopt religion.

### 6.3.6 Other public issues

The public issues subcommittee received the proposed statement on the global food crisis, and recommends no action on this statement at this time. Instead the subcommittee recommends that the statement be revised and presented to the next meeting of the executive committee in February 2009 with a clearer focus on intent, direction and actions to be taken. This course of action was acceptable to the executive committee. The public issues subcommittee considered the suggestion to comment on apostasy in Iran. Given the

importance and gravity of the new law on apostasy in Iran, the public issues subcommittee feels that this is not an opportune moment to move forward with a statement. There is a need for further consideration of the issue in question. In the weeks to come World Council of Churches staff, from both the human rights and interreligious dialogue areas, will hold meetings with Iranian government representatives as well as religious groups and will look further into this matter in order to formulate an official position. The executive committee accepted this course of action, with the request that a report be submitted to the officers in December 2008 and to the executive committee in February 2009. Due to the urgency of the matter, the executive committee also urged the general secretary to issue a clear condemnation of the new apostasy law at the earliest appropriate moment.

# 7 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENTS

## 7.1 Report of the presidents – part I

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann announced that the executive committee is meeting in a closed hearing session, welcomed the presidents (all except H.H. Abune Paulos being present), and opened the meeting with prayer.

Dr Soritua Albert Ernst Nababan invited Dr Mary Tanner to present the report of the presidents, which is offered in response to the mandate of the central committee in February 2008 as expressed in section 14.3 of the minutes, as follows:

> "After extensive discussion, the central committee approved by consensus … to request the presidents, in consultation with the officers, to initiate a thorough evaluation of all the issues related to the process concerning the possible extension of the term of the general secretary. Such an evaluation would seek to increase confidence, transparency and trust, to identify gaps in the Council's internal processes and procedures, and to bring about truth, reconciliation and healing within the fellowship of the World Council of Churches. The report of this evaluation will be given to the executive committee in September 2008 and will be communicated to all central committee members."

The entire report is printed in Appendix III. Dr Mary Tanner presented paragraphs 1-20 of the report. Rev. Dr Walter Altmann reminded executive committee members that our task at this meeting is to receive this report and to create the proposed "working group on governance, accountability and staff policy" (as instructed by the central committee), which will undertake follow-up action on the matters raised in the report.

Executive committee members then shared their responses to what had been presented. There was widespread appreciation for the content and tone of the report, for the emphasis on reconciliation, for the recognition that there has been no malicious intent on anyone's part, and for the clarity about how we can improve our life together in the Council.

The executive committee received the report as presented thus far with an outpouring of gratitude, and anticipated sending the report to the members of the central committee together with a letter expressing the tenor of this conversation.

### 7.2 Report of the presidents – part II

Having shared the first part of their report, and the executive committee having received it, the presidents then offered the final paragraph of their report, which contains a possible way forward in the matter of the interim period until the next general secretary takes office.

The suggestion of presidents was received with mixed response, as some members felt that it would aid in the process of healing and reconciliation, and others felt it might have the opposite effect. Nonetheless, the executive committee appreciated the deep and prayerful work of the presidents, and received this final paragraph of their report.

Mr Graham Gerald McGeoch wished to minute that he was unclear about the process of hearing and receiving this report.

The moderator then brought the closed session on consideration of the report of the presidents to an end.

## 8 ASSEMBLY

### 8.1 Update on the assembly discernment process

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a hearing session, and invited Rev. Dr Martin Robra to present the document updating the executive committee on the process of discernment about the shape of the next assembly (see appendix IV).

Dr Robra noted the emerging membership of the assembly discernment committee, the timeline for its work, and the agenda of the first meeting, to be held in November 2008. He shared that there has been very little formal response from the member churches, and finally drew attention to the two clear messages thus far received from the churches – the importance not to confuse the decision-making processes of different bodies, and the urgent plea not to jeopardize the fruits of the special commission on Orthodox participation in the World Council of Churches.

The executive committee engaged in discussion about the report, including the need to involve more member churches in the discussion, the lack of clarity in many minds about the exact proposal and the reasons for it, and the sense of time pressure that we must begin making concrete plans for the next assembly. The matter was referred to the staffing and nominations subcommittee for further consideration.

### 8.2 Recommendations on the assembly discernment process

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a decision session. H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima presented the recommendations of the staffing and nominations subcommittee concerning the assembly. The executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the update on assembly discernment committee (ADC) membership, preparations and listening process be received;
- that the ADC, following its meeting in November 2008, be requested to present its first report to the next executive committee in February 2009;

- that the general secretary be asked to ensure that one of the first two issues of *Ecumenical Review* in 2009 be dedicated to articles on a WCC-led assembly providing expanded space, including papers from the ADC meeting.

## 9 PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON CONSENSUS AND COLLABORATION

### 9.1 Presentation of the report of the permanent committee

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a hearing session. Mr Georges Lemopoulos presented the report of the July 2008 meeting of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration. (See appendix V.) He noted that the hospitality of the local church in Hofgeismar, Germany was especially appreciated by the committee.

The agenda of the committee was concerned with four areas: the next assembly, programme plans, the ethos of consensus, and ecclesiology. Particular items of note include a desire to deepen the ethos of consensus, going beyond the mechanics of governing body meetings; and the desire to accompany, rather than duplicate, the work of Faith and Order. There was great concern for a deeper engagement of member churches in discernment regarding the assembly and with regard to the ecclesiological work of the Council.

The executive committee engaged in discussion about the report, including sharing of the feeling, on the part of some, that the importance of the permanent committee has decreased regrettably since the assembly, and no longer carries the enthusiasm and impetus of the special commission. The report and its recommendations were referred to the programme subcommittee for further consideration.

### 9.2 Recommendations regarding the report of the permanent committee

H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a decision session. Ms Lois McCullough Dauway presented the report and recommendations of the programme subcommittee concerning the permanent committee.

The programme subcommittee received the report of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration with appreciation and expressed warm gratitude to the Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck, Germany, for hosting the meeting.

The programme subcommittee recognized that consensus is more than a decision-making instrument creating the appropriate spiritual environment for a faith community discerning the way forward. The language we use in our meetings needs to reflect the spiritual dimension of the discernment process. The consensus process will be more effective if care is taken to ensure that there is broader representation from the member churches in the work of the WCC giving more access to participation especially when there is the required expertise in the churches.

The executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the report of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration be received and forwarded to the members of the central committee, including a background paper reviewing the status of consensus method prepared by Anne Glynn-Mackoul;

- that the importance of assessing the consistent application of the consensus method in all the work, including the commissions and advisory groups, be affirmed;
- that the call to the churches to give responses to the proposal for expanded space at the WCC assembly be reiterated;
- that the proposal to include in the programme evaluation of 2009 the values of the special commission be affirmed.

# 10 FINANCE

## 10.1 Preliminary finance report

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a hearing session. Ms Elaine Dykes presented a financial overview, as follows:

### 10.1.1 Audited results 2007 compared with preliminary results

| *CHF 000* | **Results 2007** | *Prelim 2007* | *Variance fav/(unfav)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Income** | | | |
| Membership & UDI | 6,830 | *6,812* | *18* |
| Contributions | 27,928 | *27,817* | *111* |
| Investment and currency gains | (31) | *(99)* | *68* |
| Rentals, sales & other income | 6,301 | *6,288* | *13* |
| Total Income | 41,028 | *40,818* | *210* |
| **Expenditure** | | | |
| Direct programme costs: grants | 6,802 | *6,696* | *(106)* |
| Staff costs | 17,159 | *17,143* | *(16)* |
| All other programme costs and transfers | 14,304 | *14,113* | *(191)* |
| Total costs and transfers | 38,265 | *37,952* | *(313)* |
| **Net increase for the year** | **2,763** | ***2,866*** | ***(103)*** |
| Increase/(dec) Restricted Funds | 1,733 | *662* | *1,071* |
| Increase Unrestricted & Designated Funds | 1,030 | *2,204* | *(1,174)* |
| **Total** | **2,763** | ***2,866*** | ***(103)*** |

### 10.1.2 Results to July 2008 compared with Budget 2008 & Forecast

| | **July 2008** | *Budget 2008* | *Target 58.3%* | *F/cast 2008* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Income** | | | | |
| Membership & UDI | 3,990 | *6,690* | 59.6% | *6,447* |
| Contributions | 14,149 | *26,508* | 53.4% | *26,229* |
| Investment and currency gains | (856) | *407* | (210%) | *(532)* |
| Rentals, sales & misc income | 3,600 | *5,903* | 61.0% | *6,053* |
| Total Income | 20,883 | *39,508* | 52.9% | *38,197* |
| **Expenditure** | | | | |
| Grants | 2,388 | *6,110* | 39.1% | *6,198* |
| Staff costs | 10,376 | *18,744* | 55.4% | *18,118* |
| All other programme costs and transfers | 7,899 | *17,141* | 46.1% | *16,319* |
| Total costs and transfers | 20,663 | *41,995* | 49.2% | *40,635* |
| **Net increase/(decrease)** | **220** | ***(2,487)*** | | **(2,438)** |
| Inc /(Dec) Restricted Funds | 132 | *(2,812)* | | (2,725) |
| Increase Unrestricted Funds | 88 | *325* | | 287 |
| **Total** | **220** | ***(2,487)*** | | **(2,438)** |

### 10.1.3 Results to July 2008 compared with Forecast 2008

| | **Unrestricted & Designated Fund** | | **Restricted Funds** | | **Total Funds** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **July 2008** | *F/cast 2008* | **July 2008** | *F/cast 2008* | **July 2008** | *F/cast 2008* |
| **Income** | | | | | | |
| Membership & UDI | 3,990 | *6,447* | - | - | 3,990 | *6,447* |
| Contributions | - | - | 14,149 | *26,229* | 14,149 | *26,229* |
| Investment and currency | (393) | *(332)* | (463) | *(200)* | (856) | *(532)* |
| Rentals, sales & misc income | 2,376 | *4,099* | 1,224 | *1,954* | 3,600 | *6,053* |
| Distribution of unrestricted inc | (3,789) | *(5,883)* | 3,789 | *5,883* | - | - |
| **Total Income** | **2,184** | ***4,331*** | **18,699** | ***33,866*** | **20,883** | ***38,197*** |
| **Expenditure** | | | | | | |
| Grants | - | *40* | 2,388 | *6,158* | 2,388 | *6,198* |
| Staff costs | 2,564 | *4,535* | 7,812 | *13,583* | 10,376 | *18,118* |
| All other programme costs & trfs | 2,161 | *3,967* | 5,738 | *12,352* | 7,899 | *16,319* |
| Total costs before redistribution | 4,725 | *8,542* | 15,938 | *32,093* | 20,663 | *40,635* |
| Redistributed costs | (2,629) | *(4,498)* | 2,629 | *4,498* | - | - |
| **Total costs after redistrlbution** | **2,096** | ***4,044*** | **18,567** | ***36,591*** | **20,663** | ***40,635*** |
| **Surplus / (deficit)** | **88** | ***287*** | **132** | ***(2,725)*** | **220** | ***(2,438)*** |
| Opening balance | 24,164 | *24,164* | 19,851 | *19,851* | 44,015 | *44,015* |
| Surplus/(deficit) | 88 | *287* | 132 | *(2,725)* | 220 | *(2,438)* |
| **Closing balance** | **24,252** | ***24,451*** | **19,983** | ***17,126*** | **44,235** | ***41,577*** |

## 10.1.4 Balance sheet July 2008

| Assets | CHF 000s | Related Obligation | CHF 000s | Net assets/ (obligations) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Land & buildings | 39,787 | Mortgage loans & long term deferred income | 22,342 | 17,445 |
| Fixed asset investments | 9,075 | Endowment Fund | 8,262 | 813 |
| Investments | 5,980 | Programme Funds | 8,861 | (2,881) |
| Current assets | 15,147 | Current liabilities | 2,296 | 12,851 |
| | - | Long-term provisions | 1,120 | (1,120) |
| **Total assets available after deducting obligations** | | | | **27,108** |

*Covering Reserves composed as follows:*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Restricted Funds** | | | |
| Restricted Fund for Fixed Assets | 17,445 | 3,181 | |
| **Unrestricted & Designated Funds** | | | |
| Designated Programme Fund | | 533 | |
| Designated Fund for Fixed Assets | | 14,264 | |
| General Reserve | | 9,130 | **27,108** |

## 10.1.5 2009-10 Budget and Framework

Mr Mark Johnson presented a draft budget for 2009 and a budget framework for 2010.

| In CHF millions | Forecast 2008 | Draft Budget 2009 | Draft Framework Budget 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Funds & Reserves brought forward** | **44.02** | **41.58** | **40.41** |
| **Income** | | | |
| Membership & other unrestricted contribns | 6.45 | 6.44 | 6.60 |
| Programme contributions | 26.23 | 25.93 | 27.28 |
| Other Income | 5.52 | 6.32 | 6.50 |
| **Total Income** | **38.20** | **38.69** | **40.38** |
| **Expenditure** | | | |
| Programme & other costs & transfers | 22.52 | 20.64 | 21.74 |
| Salaries | 18.12 | 19.22 | 19.38 |
| **Total Expenditure** | **40.64** | **39.86** | **41.12** |
| **Net Income / Expenditure** | **(2.44)** | **(1.17)** | **(0.74)** |
| Increase Unrestricted Funds | 0.29 | 0.24 | 0.70 |
| Increase /(Decrease) Restricted Funds | (2.73) | (1.41) | (1.44) |
| | **(2.44)** | **(1.17)** | **(0.74)** |
| **Funds & Reserves carried forward** | **41.58** | **40.41** | **39.67** |

### 10.1.6 Discussion

Executive committee members appreciated the clarity of the information presented. Questions were raised about the adequacy of the pace of savings for the 10th Assembly, and about the potential impact on the Council of the current global financial crisis. Members were heartened to hear that the Council had shifted its general reserves investments to low-risk instruments and therefore has a fairly low exposure to the current market conditions. The preliminary finance report was forwarded to the finance subcommittee for consideration.

## 10.2 Report of the finance subcommittee

H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a decision session. Dean Anders Gadegaard presented the report of the finance subcommittee.

### 10.2.1 Financial report 2007

The audited financial report 2007 presented a surplus of CHF 2.8 million. General reserves were increased to CHF 10.4 million. The accounts were approved and authorized for issue by the officers of the finance committee on 14 May 2008.

Given changes in both Swiss law and International Financial Reporting Standards concerning the requirements to record a potential liability to pension funds, the WCC financial statements were presented in accordance with its own accounting policies. The accounting policies are stated in the financial report, and are consistent with those of prior years. The decision no longer to present the financial statements under IFRS was taken by the officers of the finance committee, following delegation of the decision authority by central committee in February 2008.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the financial report 2007, given that central committee does not meet until September 2009, and in accordance with Rules VIII.2.a.1;
- the requirement that a member of the finance subcommittee meet with the members of the Pension Fund Board before the year end to review the current financial situation of the pension fund.

### 10.2.2 KPMG management report 2007

A report was received from the auditors, KPMG, on control issues observed in the course of the financial audit of the year 2007, completed in May 2008. The report focused in particular on the status of issues which had been identified in prior years, concluding that actions had been taken as agreed. The process for the monitoring of financial reports received from partners who benefited from grants in 2007 was in progress at the time of the audit, and will be subject to review in the 2008 audit. The auditors raised a new recommendation concerning the requirement to test IT back-ups and to document and test a disaster recovery plan. The finance subcommittee received the report.

### 10.2.3 Appointment of auditors 2008

Following the audit tender of 2004 KPMG were appointed as auditors for 2004 and the four years thereafter, subject to annual appointment in accordance with Rule VIII. It was discussed during the audit committee meeting in April 2008 that a tender process would be launched early in 2009 to prepare an appointment proposal for financial year 2009.

Given that central committee will not meet until 2009, the executive committee approved by consensus the appointment of KPMG as auditors for 2008.

### 10.2.4 Review of results to July 2008 and forecast 2008

The results for July 2008 compared to budget and forecast 2008 were reviewed. A small net surplus of CHF 234,000 was reported in July, compared with a budgeted deficit of CHF 2.5 million for the year.

Results included CHF 400,000 in foreign currency losses, resulting from revaluation of USD and EUR balances held when rates decreased sharply in January and February 2008. Further, net unrealised investment losses totalled CHF 457,000 in July, sustained on the endowment fund portfolio of CHF 5.9 million. No interest income is forecast for the Ecumenical Institute and a decrease in the value of the endowment fund of CHF 0.2 million is forecast.

Several factors are forecast to affect adversely the budgeted addition to unrestricted funds. The foreign currency losses, estimated at CHF 400,000 for the year as mentioned above, will be charged to unrestricted funds. Membership income is forecast to be CHF 250,000 less than budgeted, following the impact of the actual USD and EUR rates compared with the rates applied in the budget. A provision of CHF 60,000 is forecast to cover potential bad debts; and an additional provision of CHF 100,000 has been included to cover the value of social charges on untaken vacation, as recommended by the auditors.

In the forecast process, programme and infrastructure cost reductions were identified with favourable impact on the call on unrestricted income. As a result, the 2008 forecast estimates a credit of CHF 287,000 to the unrestricted funds, close to the budget target of CHF 325,000.

In order to achieve the forecast result, it will be necessary that the programme and infrastructure costs now set out in the forecast are treated with the quality of a revised budget, representing new limits for 2008 expenditure.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the staff leadership group be asked to complete its planned review of the extent of services provided to related organizations by December 2008, in order to avoid the risk of further bad debts. In addition, their legal status should be verified and an annual process should be introduced to review the financial statements and budgets of those organizations;
- that the forecast 2008 be adopted as presented to this meeting as a revised budget 2008.

### 10.2.5 Budget 2009

Following the recommendation of central committee in February 2008, a working group comprised of the officers of the finance committee and representatives of the programme committee met in May to guide staff on the programme priorities which were then taken into account in developing the budget.

One officer of the finance committee noted that the report from the joint meeting had not been distributed to members of the programme committee as expected.

The draft budget for 2009 was presented showing total income of CHF 38.7 million, total expenditure of CHF 39.8 million and an addition to unrestricted funds of CHF 240,000 compared with the framework target of CHF 300,000.

The draft budget incorporates a number of increases to costs compared with the framework, including:

- inclusion of a cost of living increase of 2% for all staff (CHF 280,000);
- inclusion of a remedial contribution to the pension fund of 1% (CHF 140,000);
- reinstatement of the budget for the Faith & Order Plenary Commission (CHF 100,000);
- the addition of two interns thus budgeting for five (CHF 98,000).

The budget for membership contributions was reduced by CHF 250,000 compared to the framework, as EUR and USD are not expected to regain the levels of 2007 in 2009.

These cost increases and the effect of the reduced value in CHF of the membership contributions are offset by a number of cost reductions, including:

- the elimination of certain vacant staff positions in the framework budget by the reattribution of responsibilities to existing staff in the programmes. This has resulted in both a reduction of 4-5 FTEs and in addition has covered salary adjustments for step increases and staff reclassifications (net reduction of CHF 400,000);
- various reductions in project costs (CHF 185,000).

After adjustment for all of the above the budget reflected a shortfall compared with the target for unrestricted funds of CHF 408,000 which has then been covered by use of fund balances at the disposition of the staff leadership group, as follows:

- general endowment funds with a value of CHF 320,000 at December 2007 are available for release at the discretion of the staff leadership group and the draft budget proposes the use of CHF 150,000 in 2009;
- the Casa Locarno fund with a balance of CHF 190,000 will be applied to fund programme work in eastern Europe;
- the Jubilee fund is called upon for CHF 68,000.

The draft budget includes the creation of a reserve for the IEPC of CHF 272,000 and an addition to the Assembly Fund of CHF 150,000 which is expected to stand at CHF 1.8 million at the end of 2009. Concern was expressed as to whether this level of funding for the assembly was sufficient.

The finance subcommittee noted the trend of increase in infrastructure costs which are forecast to increase by 7.1% to CHF 4.8 million in 2008 and are then budgeted to increase by 11.9% to CHF 5.4 million in 2009. It was observed that the ratio between infrastructure costs and total programme income is growing, which is disadvantageous when presenting projects for fundraising.

It was explained that while the budget is now submitted for approval, it may be the case that certain funding partners will modify their programme contribution allocations. Since it is preferable that WCC later report to the partners in relation to their funding commitment, it may be necessary to make minor amendments to the draft budget before its final approval.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the draft budget be adopted, while remaining aware that it may be subject to minor amendment which will not impact the increase to unrestricted funds of CHF 240,000;
- that the authority to approve the final budget be delegated to the officers at their meeting in December 2009;
- that the staff be asked to investigate whether it might be possible and prudent to increase the allocation for the assembly, and to report to the executive committee in February 2009.

### 10.2.6 Framework 2010 and 2011

A framework budget for 2010 was presented showing total income of CHF 40.38 million, total expenditure of CHF 41.12 million and an addition to unrestricted funds of CHF 700,000.

The programme costs include disbursement of the 2010 Edinburgh conference reserve of CHF 1.44 million. Programme costs to be covered by current year income are therefore CHF 39.68 million compared to CHF 39.86 million in the draft budget 2009. The 2010 costs benefit by CHF 680,000 compared to 2009 as a central committee meeting will not be held.

The framework budget includes an increase of CHF 700,000 in unrestricted funds in accordance with the treasury plan for capital expenditure reviewed by the finance committee in August 2006. Membership income and other income are projected to grow by CHF 340,000 while programme contributions will be required to grow by CHF 1.35 million.

The tentative budget for the IEPC, to be held in May 2011, with 2,000 participants for a 10-day meeting, is CHF 2.6 million. Fundraising for this event is required in addition to fundraising for the 10th Assembly, the development of the Ecumenical Institute, and to balance the framework budget for 2010.

The finance subcommittee held general reservations as to whether the fundraising for IEPC, assembly and ongoing programme work would be achievable at the same time as

the proposed fundraising for the conference facility development at the Ecumenical Institute.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the requirement that a draft budget 2010 be developed for presentation to the executive committee in February 2009 maintaining the addition to unrestricted funds of CHF 700,000.

### 10.2.7 Human resource matters

A brief report was received on the status of the work accomplished in the appraisal process, and it was confirmed that the general secretary had required that programme directors and FSA managers ensure that staff take vacation in compliance with the staff rules and regulations, with the objective of reducing the value of the required accounting provision in 2009.

The staff statistics report was presented, indicating a decrease in full-time equivalent staffing to 185.37 in the 2009 budget, compared to 190.52 in June 2008.

The moderator of the finance subcommittee confirmed that he had reviewed the statement of staff loans at 30 June 2008 following the observations of the finance committee in February 2008 concerning the importance of compliance with staff rules and regulations in the matter of the required reimbursement over a period of six months. He reported that there remained a number of exceptions, in particular concerning loans taken to cover school and university fees which were regularly repaid over longer periods. Although they are strictly speaking exceptions to policy, loans with such repayment conditions have become common practice, and are not considered as exceptions by WCC.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- that step increases and salary increases as a result of reclassifications be granted only when an appraisal supporting the measure has been completed; and
- that policy and practice concerning staff loans and reimbursements be brought into concordance in order to avoid any kind of exceptions in the future and the proposed resolution of the issue be reported upon in the next finance subcommittee.

### 10.2.8 Renovation of the ecumenical centre for fire safety

The subcommittee heard a brief report on the ecumenical centre renovation for fire security which is now well advanced. With all the major contracts attributed the total budget of CHF 6.7 million has been respected.

### 10.2.9 Renovation of the main hall in the ecumenical centre

The renovation of the main hall, previously budgeted for 2010-11, is now proposed to be completed before the central committee meeting 2009 in order to conduct the works at the same time as the intervention planned for fire security exits.

An architectural plan has been developed with a budget of CHF 1.0 million which will include the following features:

- introduction of natural light through sections in the south-western wall
- replacement of the floor covering to improve acoustics and insulation
- electrical installations
- replacement of the ceiling to provide improved insulation
- improving access to the main hall and the interpretation booths

The finance subcommittee reviewed the capital expenditure plan for 2009 incorporating the main hall renovation. The total planned capital expenditure for the year is CHF 3.245 million including CHF 1.9 million related to the renovation of the ecumenical centre.

The finance subcommittee also reviewed the financing plan for capital expenditure. The projects will be funded in part from general reserves, which will be reduced to a budgeted CHF 8.1 million in 2009, and in part from loans.

A loan limit of CHF 2 million has been approved, but not yet drawn down, for the ecumenical centre renovation. In order to include the main hall renovation and maintain a target of over CHF 8 million for the general reserves, it is requested that the loan limit be increased to CHF 2.25 million.

Although members of the executive committee were concerned about the decline in financial markets and whether it was wise to make capital investments at this time, members of the finance subcommittee and finance staff reassured the committee that the plans being proposed are modest and low-risk, even in the current climate.

Therefore, upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the capital expenditure limit of CHF 3.245 million for 2009, including the renovation of the main hall; and
- the increase of the loan limit for financing capital expenditure to CHF 2.25 million.

### 10.2.10 Bossey facilities

The finance subcommittee reviewed the architectural plans and financial overview for the transformation of the existing barn at Petit Bossey into a conference centre offering a meeting room and accommodation. The estimated total project cost is CHF 7.78 million.

The finance subcommittee also reviewed a business plan for the annual operation of the facilities, showing a break-even result in the event that the entire project cost is funded by borrowing at 4%.

The business plan is based on the assumption that a 50% occupancy rate will be achieved for all rooms and the meeting room, and that within that 50%, a market rate will be charged for 50% of clients, while the remainder will benefit from a favourable rate for church groups.

An estimated surplus of CHF 40,000 would be generated if CHF 1 million were raised to finance the project.

The capital expenditure financing plan had been updated to test the impact on general reserves of this project, on the assumption that CHF 400,000 in loan repayments would be made annually, funded by the cash flow generated from depreciation charges. On the assumption that the project would either be completely funded by borrowing, or partially funded by fundraising, the general reserves would remain at a level of CHF 9 million.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the project, allowing the tender processes and work permit application to begin, as well as the requirement that fundraising materials and a fundraising plan be presented in February 2009, with a target of raising at least CHF 1 million for the project.

### 10.2.11 Income development

A report on income development was presented covering membership income, programme contributions and an update on WCC income strategy 2008-2010.

The report highlighted the need for support from member churches to turn the income strategy into plans, in particular concerning fundraising efforts from non-traditional sources.

Concerns were expressed about the future levels of membership income as some member churches are already reporting severe pressure on their resources in the current economic climate.

Efforts to maintain and build relationships with specialized ministries have been pursued by programme visits to certain of these funding partners.

A foundation fundraising officer whose position is funded for two years by ICCO has joined WCC in July 2008. Executive committee members who have personal contact with foundations are requested to assist by facilitating introductions to those foundations which may consider funding WCC projects.

Upon recommendation of the finance subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the requirement that an income development action plan, including measurable milestones and target dates, be presented at the February 2009 finance subcommittee meeting for review.

### 10.2.12 Internal control system project

A brief report was shared on the internal control system project. Since the project had been launched in February 2008, a preliminary self-assessment had been conducted, and a detailed project plan developed. Following an analysis of the balance sheet and income and expenditure account following a model proposed by the auditors, KPMG, key processes had been identified. A risk and control matrix format was designed, and is to be completed for each of the key processes.

A review meeting was held with the KPMG manager in August, confirming that the initial project steps met the legal requirements. However, KPMG have recommended that the

project completion date be brought forward to November in order that the project documentation and conclusions can be reviewed during the interim audit.

### 10.2.13 Investment review

The finance subcommittee reviewed the report on investment results to August 2008. The bond portfolio of CHF 9.3 million reported a return of 0.39%, while the balanced portfolio of CHF 5.9 million backing the endowment fund reported a loss of -5.72%.

The investment advisory group was formed and met in June and September, when an investment review was conducted with the portfolio managers from both banks concerned.

Following the review meeting, the investment advisory group recommend that the level of interest rate risk inherent in the bond portfolio be reduced in order to ensure preservation of capital. It is recommended that the CHF fixed income mandate, composed of 50% bonds and 50% three month money-market instruments be revised, and funds invested entirely in one to three month money-market instruments.

The finance subcommittee concurred with this proposal.

### 10.2.14 Executive committee income task forces

After discussion, it was agreed that the membership income task group and the fundraising advisory group be merged.

## 11 PROGRAMMES

### 11.1 Report on programmes

Due to the press of the agenda, the report on programmes was not presented to the executive committee. It was circulated in written form and forwarded to the programme subcommittee for consideration.

### 11.2 Report of the programme subcommittee

H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima moderated a decision session. Ms Lois McCullough Dauway presented the report of the programme subcommittee.

### 11.2.1 Report on programmes

The programme subcommittee of the executive committee received with appreciation the report on programmes which included as an appendix the report of the programme committee core group which met together with the leadership of the finance committee in Geneva, 17-19 May 2008. The proposals made by the core group for improving the work of the programme committee were welcomed.

Upon recommendation of the programme subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the programme committee core group be requested to meet in February 2009 just before the executive committee to prepare for its decisions;
- that the programme core group be requested to meet prior to the central committee 2009 with the leadership group of the finance committee to prepare clearly defined

proposals for the programme committee's deliberations during the central committee and for their recommendations to the central committee. (The intention here is not to replace the programme committee, but to prepare adequately for its work.);

- that the programme core group, at its February 2009 meeting, be requested to revisit the framework budget 2010 in light of the risks due to the global financial situation. This should include a reflection on the budgets both for programmes and staffing.

The programme subcommittee refers the section on broader governance questions (p. vii) in the report of the programme core group, to the working group on governance, accountability and staff policy.

### 11.2.2 Programme highlights

The programme subcommittee welcomed the highlights of the programmatic work presented by the staff and focused on a few matters only due to time constraints. Request was made that the complete highlights be sent to the members of the executive committee.

*P103 Nurturing relationships with and among member churches*

The programme subcommittee suggests that special emphasis be placed on team visits as a methodology for the work with wide participation of member churches. It encourages member churches to engage more in visits between churches.

*P105 Youth*

The programme subcommittee urges that encouragement be given to the ECHOS Commission which is engaging in a very creative way in ecumenical challenges.

*P301 Decade to Overcome Violence*

Upon recommendation of the programme subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the request that a full report on preparations for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, including information on income, programme and selection processes for participants, be brought to the executive committee at its meeting in February 2009.

The programme subcommittee also advises that in a planning and preparation process for the IEPC, the churches in the Caribbean are fully represented and that the whole region is facilitated to participate in the event, so as to strengthen ecumenical relations in the region and the relationship between the Caribbean Conference of Churches and the WCC.

*P304 Churches and the Middle East: Solidarity and Witness for Peace*

Upon recommendation of the programme subcommittee, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- the request that care be taken to ensure that churches that have a special expertise and interest in the Middle East be more fully involved in the Middle East programme, including the PIEF.

Concern was expressed that some of the churches, for example in the US, have not been included adequately in the process. The WCC could use the model used in the struggle

against apartheid where a platform had been provided for many groups to express their solidarity with the struggle. If adequate notice is given about events being organized, the churches in a country with commitment to the Middle East could prepare their own joint response and thus contribute to the process.

*P401 – WCC Eastern European Office*

The programme subcommittee welcomes the developments with regard to the WCC Eastern European Office in Poland, and recommends that a progress report be presented to the executive committee in February 2009 and that the role and participation of the churches in the region are not jeopardized by any new arrangement. The WCC should continue to play a facilitating role in the process.

*ACT Development and unification process with ACT International*

The programme subcommittee was updated on the developments in the ACT process. Concern was expressed that the churches need to be more involved. The churches sometimes feel that they are not informed about regional or national consultations. The importance of the ACT process was affirmed as it is intended to provide a more equitable way of relationship between development agencies in the north and south. Caution was expressed that small churches may feel marginalized and need to be intentionally included.

*P402 Regional relations - Africa*

Concern was expressed about the lack of attention to the Africa focus approved in the Harare Assembly and reconfirmed in the Porto Alegre Assembly. A question was raised of as whether the WCC adequately follows-up on post-conflict situations, such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The programme subcommittee therefore advises that attention be given to lusophone and francophone Africa and that a strategy be developed for follow-up on these complex situations.

### 11.2.3 Midterm programme evaluation

The programme subcommittee welcomed the proposal for the WCC midterm programme evaluation in 2009 and recommends to the executive committee that it be conducted.

The programme subcommittee recommends that the evaluation include:

- the WCC's progress in implementing the main findings of the special commission and the implementation of the consensus spirit
- reflections on the learnings based on the evaluation
- clear terms of reference developed by the staff
- proposals concerning projects that could be merged
- clear connection with the programme committee core group

## 12 POSITION OF GENERAL SECRETARY

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann announced that the executive committee is meeting in a closed hearing session and opened the meeting with prayer. He reminded the meeting that, according to rule XII.2, "When the position of general secretary becomes vacant, the executive committee shall appoint an acting general secretary." As Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia had indicated to the central committee that he would not continue beyond the end of his contract on 31 December 2008, this executive committee must take responsible action to provide for the leadership of the Council as the search committee proceeds with its work.

The hearing session included discussion of the suggestion at the end of the presidents' report, varied interpretations of the minutes of the central committee, varied understandings of whether a "vacancy" exists, varied interpretations of Rule XII.2, the lack of a definition of the duties and authority of an "acting general secretary" (in the sense in which it is used in the Rule), the sense by some that the Council is experiencing a leadership crisis, and the need for trust-building within the governing bodies and with the member churches.

The executive committee approved by consensus to shift the category of discussion from a closed hearing session to closed decision session. The moderator asked the committee to consider whether the suggestion from the presidents might be a possible way forward.

Dean Anders Gadegaard presented his concerns in detail regarding the general secretary's financial administration, and suggested an external review to clarify specific financial areas. Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia carefully responded to the issues presented, and stated that he did not feel an external review was warranted. Executive committee members were extremely grateful to have all this information in the open, where its implications could be examined. It was hoped that the spirit of mistrust within the executive committee could now be dispelled and the focus put on correcting any weaknesses in the Council's systems, as foreseen in the proposal to form a working group and in the ongoing review of staff rules and regulations.

After a break, the executive committee continued its closed session, without the general secretary present.

Dean Anders Gadegaard promoted his proposal that an external review be conducted of two specific programmes, for the purpose of clearing any remaining questions in the minds of the member churches about the state of the Council's affairs. This suggestion was welcomed by some members, who felt it would increase transparency, and not by others, who felt that it would only perpetuate the spirit of suspicion and distrust. Some members felt that this task would be better assigned to the proposed working group. There were strong differences of opinion as to whether consideration of this external review should be linked to consideration of the presidents' suggestion, which was the matter under discussion in the decision session at that moment. The committee asked the officers to work overnight on ways to help the committee move forward in the spirit of healing, reconciliation and consensus.

After an overnight break, Rev. Dr Walter Altmann resumed the closed decision session. Recognizing the interrelatedness of three matters – the post of general secretary as of 1 January 2009, the anticipated working group, and the proposed external review – and

recognizing the importance of coming to clear decisions at this meeting, the moderator offered the procedural proposal that these three matters be considered under voting procedures, as provided in Rule XX.9.f. This proposal requiring an 85% majority, the moderator proceeded to call for a vote. With 21 in favour, none against and 2 abstaining, the motion to move to voting procedures was carried.

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann then presented the proposal of the officers, based on their overnight consultations, as follows:

- to appoint Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia as acting general secretary for the year 2009. Acting general secretary is here understood as the person to assume the responsibilities and authority of the office of the general secretary (not to be confused with the "acting general secretary" as is customarily used when the general secretary is travelling);
- to recruit an external management consultant to assist the working group on governance, accountability and staff policy. The working group and the consultant will report to the executive committee through the officers (it is proposed that the staffing and nominations subcommittee consider this point and bring their recommendation);
- to request KPMG, before the end of 2008, to undertake a supplementary review of the programme for leadership training 2003-04 and the general secretary visits programme 2004-07. The report should be presented at the officers meeting in December 2008 (it is proposed that the finance subcommittee consider this point and bring their recommendation);

He stated that the officers intend for the three areas under consideration to be taken as a whole, and hoped that two of the three could be prepared by the subcommittees for recommendation at a later moment in the closed session.

In discussion, members raised the question of whether Dr Kobia's continued service should be considered an "acting general secretary" or not, and if "acting", what the definition of this role would entail. There were strong reservations among some members as to whether the executive committee has the authority, under Rule XII.2, to extend the contract of Dr Kobia, as the presidents have suggested.

At the request of a member, the moderator instructed that the minutes should record that offensive language and behaviour is not acceptable in the World Council of Churches. Mr Graham G. McGeoch wished the minutes to record that he is embarrassed by the use and abuse of power by the governing bodies of the World Council of Churches.

Rev. Dr Tyrone Pitts offered a substitute motion in place of the officers' proposal. Dr Pitts moved "to extend the contract of Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia to serve as general secretary until such time as a new general secretary has been elected and taken office." The motion was seconded by Rev. Dr Larry Pickens.

Some members questioned the legality of this motion, and the committee was not able to reach a common understanding of the legal issues. After discussion about the importance of coming forward with a clear decision during this meeting, it was agreed to proceed to a vote on Dr Pitts motion.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima moved, and Metr. Dr Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos seconded, that the vote be by secret ballot. Those in favour of a secret ballot were 8, with 7 against and 9 abstaining. The motion was carried.

The moderator then called for a vote by secret ballot on the motion of Dr Pitts.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian wished to minute his dissociation from the voting process, due to the atmosphere of animosity and accusation which exists in the room.

Dean Anders Gadegaard, Bishop Martin Schindehütte, Ms Margareta Grape, H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima, Ms Outi Vasko, Rev. Carmen Lansdowne and Metr. Dr Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos all wished to minute that they abstain from voting because they believe it is not in accordance with the powers given to the executive committee in the Rules.

With these comments having been noted, the members proceeded to cast their ballots. The ballots were collected and counted in the face of the meeting, and the results were announced as follows: those in favour were 15, with none against, 1 invalid ballot, and 8 abstaining. The motion was carried to extend the contract of Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia to serve as general secretary until such time as a new general secretary has been elected and taken office.

Bishop Martin Schindehütte wished the minutes to record that he informed the executive committee of his intention to speak openly about these proceedings with the synod of his church and in the press.

The moderator then called the attention of the committee to the second and third point of the officers' motion (the first point having been superseded by the vote just conducted). Members discussed the second point, about the working group, and suggested that the working group report to the central committee, with interim reports to the officers and the executive committee. Comments were made as to the ideal size and composition of the working group, the value of a professional consultant, and the importance of its independence within the house.

Reminding the committee that voting procedures still apply, the moderator asked for a vote on referring the second point of the officers' motion, together with the submissions here given, to the staffing and nominations subcommittee for the formulation of recommendations. Those in favour were 19. With none against and 5 abstaining, the motion was carried to refer the matter of the working group to the staffing and nominations subcommittee. Final consideration of this item is recorded elsewhere in these minutes.

After a short break, the closed session continued with the general secretary in attendance. The moderator informed the general secretary of the decisions taken, and members of the executive committee shared with Dr Kobia some of the issues and concerns that had been discussed, to which Dr Kobia responded with expressions of friendship and mutual respect.

The moderator then called the attention of the committee to the third point of the officers' motion, regarding the external review, and asked members to consider referring the matter to the finance subcommittee for formulation of a recommendation. Dean Anders

suggested that the specified areas for review be broadened, to emphasize that it is the management systems that are in question, not the integrity of any individuals. Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia strongly objected to any external review.

Ms Lois McCullough Dauway moved that the matter not be referred to the finance subcommittee, but rather that it be considered by the executive committee as a whole. Ms Nerissa Celestine-James seconded the motion. The moderator called for a vote, in which 16 were in favour. With one against and 3 abstaining, the motion was carried to defer consideration of the proposed external review to the next closed session of the executive committee.

After a break in which the subcommittees met to carry out their work, the moderator reconvened the closed decision session. The moderator ruled on a point of order regarding offensive language from the morning session, that the comment was indeed inappropriate, and reiterated his call that offensive, degrading or humiliating language not be used.

Mr Mark Beach, Director of Communication, joined the session to present a draft press release announcing the decision to extend the contract of the general secretary. After some minor wording adjustments, the executive committee authorized Mr Beach to issue the press release. The final version of the text is as follows:

> ***Samuel Kobia's term as WCC general secretary extended***
>
> *The executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) meeting 23-26 September in Lübeck, Germany announced their decision to extend the contract of Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, the current WCC general secretary, through the time when a new general secretary takes office.*
>
> *A new WCC general secretary is to be elected at the Council's central committee meeting to be held in Geneva, Switzerland from 26 August to 2 September 2009. At the February 2008 central committee meeting a search committee was formed after Kobia announced he would not seek a second term as general secretary.*
>
> *"By accepting this, Rev Kobia will bring continuity to the office while we go through the transition process of finding a new general secretary," said Rev. Dr Walter Altmann, the moderator of the WCC central committee.*
>
> *During this week's executive committee meeting the search committee reported on responses they received from member churches on the current job description of the general secretary and conversations held with WCC staff on the role of a new general secretary. Applications for the general secretary will be accepted as soon as a revised job description is released in October.*

The executive committee then proceeded to address the draft job description and other staffing matters, as recorded elsewhere in these minutes.

The moderator then called the attention of the executive committee to the final proposal of the officers, requesting KPMG to carry out a supplementary review. Ms Lois McCullough Dauway made a substitute motion, "to request that the working group ensure that an external supplementary review be undertaken of the programmes Leadership Training 2003-2004 and the general secretary visitation programme 2004-2007." The motion was seconded by Rev. Dr Tyrone Pitts.

In discussion, concern was expressed that assigning this task to the working group would significantly prolong the timeline. On the other hand, there was a desire to avoid the potential embarrassment to the Council of inviting in an independent auditor.

The moderator called for a vote on the officers' motion. Those in favour numbered 11. With 8 against and 2 abstaining, the motion was carried to request KPMG, before the end of 2008, to undertake a supplementary review of the programmes Leadership Training 2003-2004 and the general secretary visitation programme 2004-2007. The report should be presented at the officers meeting in December 2008 and to the executive committee in February 2009.

This having been approved, the substitute motion is automatically defeated.

The moderator then closed the session.

# 13 Search Committee

## 13.1 Search committee report

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a hearing session. Dr Agnes Aboum presented a report of the search committee's work so far. The committee met in July to work on the job description and to hear a report from a small delegation who met with representatives of the staff. Their work so far has caused them to make several comments to the executive committee regarding organizational procedures. They also shared a draft job description and nomination form for consideration.

In discussion, members of the executive committee noted with concern that the draft job description was not shared with central committee members for feedback between July and September, as had been envisioned in the central committee minutes.

The report and recommendations of the search committee were referred to the staffing and nominations subcommittee for further consideration.

## 13.2 Job description of the general secretary

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann moderated a closed decision session. H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima presented the recommendations of the staffing and nominations committee regarding the draft job description for the post of general secretary.

The executive committee approved by consensus:

- the proposed job description of the WCC general secretary, and asked the general secretary to ensure that it is sent out during the month of October 2008;
- that the general secretary be asked to ensure that all central committee members receive the job description and are invited to give their feedback on any substantive changes to the moderator of the search committee by mid-October;
- that the officers be authorized, in consultation with the moderator of the search committee, to adjust the job description as necessary taking into account feedback received from the central committee members.

The approved job description is as follows:

## World Council of Churches - General Secretary
## Role and Responsibilities

### WCC basis

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." (WCC Constitution Article I)

### WCC purposes and functions

"The World Council of Churches is constituted by the churches to serve the one ecumenical movement....The primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe." (WCC Constitution Article III)

### 9th Assembly programme priorities (2006 - 2013)

In February 2006, the WCC's 9th Assembly formulated the Council's programme priorities for the period ahead. So, over the next seven years, the WCC will be working within the framework of six new programmes, each of which builds on past work in these areas, and includes several time-bound projects and activities:

1. The WCC and the ecumenical movement in the 21st century
2. Unity, mission, evangelism and spirituality
3. Public witness: addressing power, affirming peace
4. Justice, diakonia and responsibility for creation
5. Education and ecumenical formation
6. Inter-religious dialogue and cooperation

### Basic role of the general secretary

The general secretary shall be elected by the central committee. He or she is the chief executive officer of the World Council. As such, he or she is the head of the staff. (WCC Rules XII.2) He or she serves as a spokesperson for the WCC in communicating the prophetic statements for the Council.

### Areas of responsibilities

1. As chief executive officer of the WCC and head of the staff, the general secretary shall have the responsibility of developing and interpreting the strategic vision of the WCC consistent with its Basis and Purposes, the mandates of the Assemblies during which he or she serves, and in consultation with its officers and governing bodies.
2. Consistent with the Constitution and Rules of the WCC and Swiss law, the general secretary shall assemble staff and advisors qualified and mandated to develop and implement WCC programmes and objectives as approved by the governing bodies.

3. Together with WCC staff and advisors, the general secretary will listen to, gather, analyse, interpret and respond to the changing religious and cultural context, the changing ecclesial and ecumenical context, the changing international and political context, and the changing economic and social context as these affect the member churches, the fellowship of churches and the ecumenical movement.
4. The general secretary will represent the WCC as the privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement, interpreting the WCC to the member churches, ecumenical and other partners, secular bodies and governmental authorities, and the world at large.

**Qualifications**

1. The general secretary – man or woman – will be expected to be a gifted, skilled and experienced Christian theologian and leader with deep spiritual discernment grounded in scripture and prayer as an active lay or ordained member of a worshipping Christian community that is one of the member churches of the WCC.
2. The general secretary will be expected to demonstrate (a) deep knowledge and experience with the WCC, (b) understanding, respect and sensitivity for its various member churches and ecumenical partners, (c) commitment to hold in balance and together the different historical streams of work of the Council, and (d) a clear commitment to the world-wide mission of the church today.
3. He or she must have a breadth and depth of vision for the future WCC and the ecumenical movement and must be able to articulate – orally and in writing – the possibilities and promise of the ecumenical movement, and be deeply committed to ecumenism and the purposes of the WCC. He or she will lead the development of the WCC's organization consistent with the stated programme priorities.
4. He or she must have knowledge of and relationships with other faiths and a commitment to inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.
5. Among the most crucial of administrative roles of the general secretary will be his or her intentional cultivation of teamwork and respect within the staff of the WCC and between and among the staff and the members of governing bodies, listening to and building consensus and fellowship within the staff and building bridges among the various areas of work. The general secretary will encourage and nurture staff expertise, commitment and dialogue, made manifest in a dedicated and spiritual community of the Council.
6. The general secretary will be accountable to the central committee for the programmes, policies and strategic direction of the WCC, and will delegate to competent qualified staff appropriate responsibilities and assure the effective and efficient management of the human and financial resources of the Council with transparency.

**Requirements**

1. A nomination and recommendation must be received from the leadership of the WCC member church of which the applicant is a member.
2. A post-graduate degree in theology, preferably a doctorate.

3. Normally fluent in English and at least one other WCC working language.

**Term of appointment**

"The normal terms of appointment for the general secretary and for the deputy general secretary or secretaries shall be five years. Unless some other period is stated in the resolution making the appointment, the first term of office for all other staff appointed by the executive or central committee shall normally be four years from the date of the appointment. All appointments shall be reviewed one year before their expiration. Retirement shall normally be at sixty-five for both men and women and in no case shall it be later than the end of the year in which a staff member reaches the age of sixty-eight." (Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches, Rule IX.6.)

## 14 Working Group on Governance, Accountability and Staff Policy

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann moderated a closed decision session under voting procedures. H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima presented the recommendations of the staffing and nominations committee regarding the establishment of a working group on governance, accountability and staff policy. (See the discussion paper in appendix VI.)

After discussion of the importance of the work envisioned, the executive committee approved by unanimous vote:

- that the general secretary be asked to ensure that preliminary work for the anticipated "working group on governance, accountability and staff policy" is presented to the officers for decision at their meeting in December 2008, prior to which the members of the executive committee shall be consulted by email. This preliminary work should include the terms of reference, agenda, timeline, criteria of membership and suggestions for membership of the working group;
- that the general secretary be asked to prepare terms of reference for an external management consultant, to be hired by the officers in December 2008. This consultant is expected to begin work in January 2009 and to work through the central committee meeting in September 2009;
- that the general secretary be asked to ensure that the scope of work for the working group take full account of the relevant documents and discussions of this current executive committee, including the reports of the presidents and the search committee;
- that the general secretary be asked to ensure that the first meeting of the working group take place before the executive committee in February 2009, and that the group present a preliminary report to the executive committee at that time.

# 15 STAFFING

## 15.1 Closed session on staffing

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann moderated a closed decision session. H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima presented the report of the staffing and nominations committee regarding staffing.

### 15.1.1 Appointments

The executive committee approved by consensus:

- the appointment of Rev. Dr Daniel BUDA (Romanian Orthodox Church), Programme Executive for Church and Ecumenical Relations in P-1, the WCC and the ecumenical movement in the 21st century, with a four-year contract from a date to be mutually agreed on and subject to obtaining a work permit.
- the appointment of Ms Carla KHIJOYAN (Armenian Orthodox, Catholicosate of Cilicia), Programme Executive, Justice, Diakonia and Responsibility for Creation, with a four-year contract from 1 January 2009.

### 15.1.2 Contract extension

The executive committee approved by consensus:

- the extension of the contract of Mr Douglas CHIAL, Programme Executive for the coordination of Church and Ecumenical Relations (current second three-year contract ends on 30 September 2009). By this extension, the contract will become indefinite.

### 15.1.3 End of term of service

The executive committee approved by consensus:

- the proposal for Dr Aruna GNANADASON to continue as Executive Director of Planning and Integration until 30 September 2009 and that from 1 October to 31 December 2009, she be granted an end-of-service sabbatical to undertake a special writing project.

The executive committee received the information that the contract of Dr William TEMU, ending on 31 December 2009, will not be renewed in favour of an early retirement.

### 15.1.4 Vacancies

The executive committee received the recommendation of the staffing and nominations subcommittee regarding declaring vacancies for two associate general secretary positions. After discussion about the merits of, on the one hand, allowing the new general secretary to participate in hiring, and on the other hand not delaying hiring to such an extent as to leave the leadership of the Council weakened, the executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the vacancy open for Associate General Secretary for Programme be declared vacant, effective 1 January 2010:

- that the general secretary be asked to ensure that the recruitment process for this position be started in order for the appointment to be made by the central committee in September 2009;
- that consideration of the declaration of a vacancy for Associate General Secretary for Finance, Services and Administration to the central committee for their consideration be deferred.

### 15.1.5 Update on staffing

The executive committee received the information submitted by the general secretary on changes in staffing since the last meeting of the executive committee.

*Position of Programme Executive: Economic Justice*

Ms Athena PERALTA has been invited to continue her services as Consultant on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology: Impact of Economic Globalization, until 31 December 2009. She is located in Manila, Philippines.

*Position of Programme Executive: Inter-religious Dialogue and Cooperation*

Following the posting of the position many applications were received out of which five candidates were short-listed for interview. After the interviews were carried out several factors were considered regarding the best two candidates and the general secretary decided not to make a recommendation for appointment. The search process will continue, including targeted recruitment.

*Position of Consultant for Evangelism*

Mr Lawrence Michael John BAXTER-BROWN (Church of England) has been invited to fill the position of Consultant for Evangelism.

The following staff members have assumed their responsibilities since the last meeting of the executive committee:

Mrs Kelly BROWNLEE (Methodist Church), USA, Development Officer Foundations, started work on 7 July 2008.

Mr Daniel RICHARDS (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem), EAPPI Local Programme Coordinator in Jerusalem, started work on 4 July 2008.

The following staff have been appointed under the authority of the general secretary:

Ms Maria Cazilda CHAVEZ QUISPE (Methodist Church in Bolivia), Bolivia, Indigenous Peoples Consultant, two-year contract that will start 1 December 2008 subject to obtaining a work permit.

Ms Nan BRAUNSCHWEIGER (Church of Scotland), IEPC Coordinator, effective 1 September 2008.

Ms Maike GORSBOTH, Coordinator for Ecumenical Water Network (following the recommendation of the Ecumenical Water Network Steering Group she has been renewed for an additional two years when her first contract expires 31 December 2008).

Ms Faautu TALAPUSI (Congregational Christian Church in Samoa), as responsible for coordinating regional relationships for the Pacific, effective 1 January 2009.

### 15.1.6 Departures

The executive committee received the information submitted by the general secretary on staff departures during 2008.

Ms Tania ZARRAGA, Project Assistant, P4 – Justice, Peace and Responsibility for Creation, effective 31 December 2008. This is a voluntary departure/resignation.

Ms Denyse LEGER, Coordinating Librarian, effective 31 May 2008. This is a voluntary departure/resignation to take up employment elsewhere.

Ms Samia OURAIED, Administrative Assistant, P2 – Unity, Mission, Evangelism and Spirituality, effective 31 July 2008. This is a voluntary departure/resignation to take up employment with another organization where she was needed urgently.

### 15.1.7 Performance appraisals

The executive committee received the information submitted by the general secretary regarding performance appraisals for the staff, and asked the general secretary to complete the exercise and to address the issues and needs identified through the performance appraisal process.

### 15.1.8 Limiting years of service

The executive committee received the update from the general secretary on limiting years of service, noting the possible impact of implementing this rule on balances within the staff and the WCC pension fund. It also asks the general secretary to work out a schedule with a time line on departures of staff using the objective criteria, to carry out an inventory and analysis on how many of the former WCC staff have gone back to work with their churches or ecumenical organizations and to report to the next executive committee in February 2009.

### 15.1.9 Secondment of staff

The executive committee received the information submitted by the general secretary on secondment of staff, and requests the general secretary to identify the seconded staff in the staff list shared with the executive committee, along with the terms of each secondment.

## 15.2 Staff rules and regulations

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated an open decision session. H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima presented the recommendations of the staffing and nominations subcommittee regarding staff rules and regulations. The executive committee asked the general secretary to continue the work on revising the staff rules and regulations. It was regretted that this work was not ready for approval at this meeting, as had been instructed by the central committee in February 2008. The executive committee therefore approved by consensus:

- that the general secretary be asked to present the staff rules for approval by the executive committee in February 2009;

- that the general secretary be asked to present the staff regulations for approval by the executive committee and the central committee in September 2009, after appropriate consultation with the staff.

## 16 NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

### 16.1 Nominations to governing and consultative bodies

Rev. Dr Margaretha M. Hendriks-Ririmasse moderated a decision session. H.E. Metropolitan Prof Dr Gennadios of Sassima presented the recommendations of the staffing and nominations subcommittee concerning nominations to governing and consultative bodies.

The executive committee approved by consensus:

- the appointment of Ms Christina Biere (Evangelical Church in Germany) to the core group of the programme committee following the resignation of Magali Nascimento de Cunha:
- the appointment of Mrs Sirpa Okulov (Orthodox Church in Finland) to the Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation, following the resignation of Mrs Riina Nguyen of the same church.

### 16.2 Elections at the next assembly

Taking note of the background document presented by the general secretary, as well as further clarifications offered during the discussion, the executive committee was sympathetic to the request of the North American churches to have additional time for consultation in the region on the nomination of a president to serve after the next assembly.

At the same time, the executive committee was reminded of the report of the Porto Alegre nominations committee, requesting that follow-up of the issues and challenges identified be conducted prior to the 10th Assembly. The growing ethos toward more inclusive ecumenical instruments also provides an opportunity to reflect on the composition and method of selection of the governing bodies of the Council.

Therefore the executive committee approved by consensus:

- that the general secretary be asked to send a letter to the member churches in North America encouraging them to begin the search for a North American president for the next assembly in 2013;
- that the issues raised in the general secretary's background paper for this meeting and in the final report of the nominations committee at Porto Alegre be forwarded to the assembly planning committee.

## 17 EVALUATION

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann moderated a hearing session. He reminded the committee that there had been a session scheduled for evaluation, but that this was no longer possible due to time constraints. He encouraged all members to submit their written evaluations before

leaving Lübeck. In discussion, members were urged to comment on more than just the logistical arrangements, and to reflect also on the quality of the deliberations, the deepening of fellowship, the integration of a consensus ethos, and the content of the work accomplished.

## 18 Dates of Next Meetings

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia informed the executive committee of the following meeting dates:

- 17-20 February 2009 (arrival 16th, departure 21st) in Geneva
- 24-25 August 2009 (arrival 23rd), followed by central committee 26 August – 2 September 2009, presumably in Geneva
- 23-26 February 2010 in Geneva
- 14-17 September 2010 in Scotland
- 14-15 February 2011, followed by central committee 16-23 February 2011, in Geneva
- 13-16 September 2011 in Addis Ababa (pending a formal invitation)
- 14-17 February 2012 in the Pacific region (pending a formal invitation). Members should set aside extra time for discussions and exposure visits.
- 27-28 August 2012, followed by central committee 29 August – 5 September in either Crete or Rhodes
- 19-22 February 2013 in Geneva

## 19 Closing Actions

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann invited Oberkirchenrat Thiedemann to address the meeting. Speaking on behalf of Bishop Dr Hans Christian Knuth, he expressed profound thanks to the executive committee for coming to Lübeck. He gave special gifts of appreciation to those who had assisted with the arrangements of the meeting and to those who had touched him personally during these days.

Bishop Martin Schindehütte, speaking on behalf of the Evangelical Church in Germany, expressed his thanks to the committee for accepting the invitation to meet in Germany, and prayed that the discussions over these days would be fruitful for the World Council of Churches and that God would bless our common work.

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann then offered his deep gratitude, on behalf of the World Council of Churches, to the Northelbian Church and the EKD for their hospitality. He expressed the particular appreciation of executive committee members for the exposure visits which provided an opportunity to experience the life and work of the church in this area and in this country. The moderator then offered words of gratitude to the World Council of Churches staff, both those present and those who remained in Geneva, for facilitating the meeting. To the members of the executive committee, the moderator expressed thanks for their intensive and diligent work, and confidence that this experience will strengthen the witness of the World Council of Churches for Christian unity.

On behalf of the members of the executive committee, Dr Agnes Abuom expressed appreciation for the leadership of the officers during the meeting. She thanked them for their patience, prayer and gentle guidance, and expressed the commitment of all the members to continue to hold the officers in prayer.

Rev. Dr Walter Altmann then shared a closing prayer based on Psalm 121, and declared the meeting closed.

## 20 APPENDIX I – MEMBERS PRESENT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Officers: | Rev. Dr Walter Altmann | Moderator |
| | Metr. Prof. Gennadios of Sassima | Vice-Moderator |
| | Rev. Dr Margaretha Hendriks-Ririmasse | Vice-Moderator |
| | Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia | General Secretary |

Members:
Bishop Ivan M. Abrahams
Dr Agnes Abuom
Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
Bishop Samuel R. Azariah
Ms Nerissa Celestine-James
Ms Margareta Grape
Ms Hae Sun Jung
Rev. Carmen Lansdowne
Rev. Sanele Faasua Lavatai
Pastor Antonio P. Malungo
Mr Graham G. McGeoch
Metr. Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Ms Iyabo Oyekola
Rev. Dr Larry Pickens
Rev. Dr Tyrone Pitts
Bishop Martin Schindehütte
Metr. Dr Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos
Ms Outi Vasko

Ex officio:
Dean Anders Gadegaard
Ms Lois McCullough Dauway

Substitution:
Bishop Nareg Alemezian, for Metr. Bishoy of Damiette
Fr Mikhail Gundiaev, for Bishop Dr Hilarion Alfeyev

Apologies:
Bishop Dr Hilarion Alfeyev
Metr. Bishoy of Damiette

Staff:
Mr Jean-Nicolas Bazin
Mr Mark Beach
Ms Catherine Christ-Taha
Ms Elaine Dykes
Dr Mathew George
Dr Aruna Gnanadason
Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory
Mr Mark Johnson
Mr Georges Lemopoulos
Ms Christina Papazoglou

Rev. Dr Martin Robra
Dr William Temu

Minute-Writer: Eden Grace

Administration: Ms Ursula Zierl

## 21 Appendix II – Membership of Subcommittees

**Programme**
Dr Agnes Abuom
Rev. Dr Walter Altmann
Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
Ms Nerissa Celestine-James
Fr Mikhail Gundiaev
Ms Lois McCullough Dauway (Convener)
Ms Margareta Grape
Pastor Antonio P. Malungo
Rev. Dr Tyrone Pitts
Ms Outi Vasko

**Finance**
Bishop Ivan Abrahams
Dean Anders Gadegaard (Convener)
Rev. Dr Margaretha Hendriks-Ririmasse
Rev. Carmen Lansdowne
Ms Iyabo Oyekola
Bishop Martin Schindehütte
Metr. Dr Vasilios of Constantia-Ammochostos

**Staffing and Nominations**
Bishop Nareg Alemezian
Bishop Samuel R. Azariah
Metr. Prof. Gennadios of Sassima
Ms Hae Sun Jung
Rev. Sanele Faasua Lavatai
Mr Graham G. McGeoch
Metropolitan Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Rev. Dr Larry Pickens

**Public Issues**
Dr Agnes Abuom (Convener)
Ms Margareta Grape
Fr Mikhail Gundiaev
Rev Sanele Faasua Lavatai
Pastor Antonio Malungo
Metropolitan Dr Nifon of Targoviste
Rev. Dr Tyrone Pitts
Bishop Martin Schindehütte
Ms Outi Vasko

# 22 Appendix III – Report of the Presidents

## Introduction

*Who we are*

The eight presidents are a diverse group of women and men, ordained and lay, who bring together the perspectives of different cultures, different ecclesial traditions, different languages. Between us we have much experience at the local, regional and international levels of the ecumenical movement. We have each worked closely with different areas of the World Council's work over many years, some of us serving as members of the staff of the WCC. According to the Constitution the role of the presidents is "to promote ecumenism and to interpret the work of the WCC…." To *interpret the work of the World Council of Churches* entails giving precise information about facts and critical issues. In order to *promote ecumenism*, we understand we have a responsibility to propose improvements in the structures and procedures that enable the work of the WCC. The presidents are elected by the assembly from the member churches and serve as members of the central committee.

*Our Mandate*

The central committee, at its meeting in Geneva in February, 2008, took the following decision:

> The central committee requests the presidents in consultation with the officers to initiate a thorough evaluation of all the issues related to the process concerning the possible extension of the term of the general secretary. Such an evaluation would seek to increase confidence, transparency and trust, to identify gaps in the Council's internal processes and procedures, and to bring about truth, reconciliation and healing within the fellowship of the World Council of Churches. The report of this evaluation will be given to the executive committee in September 2008, and be communicated to all central committee members.

*Our process in carrying out our mandate*

Our response to the decision of the central committee began already at the meeting of the central committee in discussions we held with the officers and some members of the central committee. The presidents met together in Bossey, 16-20 May, 2008. The fact that the officers were also meeting at this time in Geneva meant that we could consult and pray together in the Chapel at Bossey for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in carrying out our work together. We wrote a letter to the staff of the WCC and members of the central committee telling them of our time in Bossey.

The presidents are grateful for the consultation with the officers, some members of the executive committee, as well as the times of sharing with some senior members of the staff of the WCC, and for the honesty with which all spoke. We realize that in carrying out our mandate we have added to the work of the general secretary, the moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee, the moderator of the finance committee and many of the senior staff and officers of the Council. The times we have spent together, as well as the written reports they have shared with us, have helped us to understand better the events of the last months.

Our mandate speaks of carrying out our evaluation "in consultation with the officers." We and the officers have understood this to mean that nothing should be done without the knowledge of the officers and that any results of our reflections should be shared with the officers for comment before offering our evaluation to the executive committee and then to the members of the central committee. We have attempted to share the progress of our work with the officers at every stage and sought their comments, though the constraints of time and opportunity have not always made this easy. We were concerned in our working with the officers to show a model of consultative practice in working within the WCC. In September, 2008, the presidents met together in Lübeck and once more met with the officers, prior to the meeting of the executive committee.

**The process relating to the extension of the contract of the general secretary**

The presidents reviewed the events in the process undergone regarding the possible extension of the contract of the general secretary. We have learnt that as a result of a preliminary consultation at the meeting of the officers in May 2007, the moderator of the central committee wrote to the general secretary inviting him to write a self assessment of his performance as the general secretary.

As noted in the minutes of the executive committee in Armenia in September 2007, the moderator shared the self assessment of the general secretary with the members of the executive committee. He reported that there is no process for the renewal of the contract of a general secretary laid down in the rules of the Council. It merely states that "the general secretary shall be elected by the central committee." It should be noted, however, that past practice was for the moderators to discuss with the general secretary his performance and then to make a recommendation to the executive committee and then to the central committee. It is our understanding that this evaluation used the Job Description as its criteria.

In light of the lack of a formal written process for evaluation, the moderator proposed a course of action which entailed seeking representations from the members of the executive committee and the presidents, prior to the meeting of the officers in December 2007. In the light of this the officers would prepare a recommendation to put before the executive committee in February 2008. After discussion in the executive committee a recommendation would be put to the central committee. The executive committee endorsed the proposed process but noted that in future provision should be made in the rules of the Council for the extension of a contract of a general secretary.

From September until the December officers' meeting, the moderator followed the process he had outlined to the executive committee, seeking responses from members of the executive committee and from the presidents. He met with members of the Staff Leadership Group and Directors of Programmes to discuss the work of the Council under the leadership of the general secretary. Together with the vice-moderators, the moderator met with Dr Sam Kobia asking about his self assessment and his willingness to continue. On the basis of these discussions a proposal was formed to put to the executive committee.

Between December and February questions began to be raised about the PhD degree of the general secretary from Fairfax University, Louisiana (no longer in existence). These

were brought to the attention of the moderator of the central committee and the moderator of the finance committee. The moderator of the central committee brought the questions to the attention of the general secretary, who was surprised with them. Upon research, with the collaboration of the general secretary, it became clear that the degree is invalid. The general secretary, on the basis of an advertisement in *The Guardian* newspaper in 2000, was enrolled to the programme in October 2002 and was awarded the PhD degree in February 2004, but Fairfax University, Louisiana had agreed on 24 August 2000 "to discontinue operations immediately… as an academic degree-granting institution" (cf. minutes of the Board of Regents of the State of Louisiana). Questions relating to the degree were reported in the press on 5 February 2008. This raised considerable speculation about the precise details of the matter and their significance. There were differing opinions about the importance of the issue or whether it had any relevance at all in relation to the extension of the contract of the general secretary. The general secretary had been appointed to his post before receiving this doctoral graduate degree. Reactions to the matter of the degree varied considerably according to the particular academic culture people came from. Too easily people became suspicious of one another and accusations were made.

On 17 February Dr Sam Kobia shared with the central committee his decision not to seek a second term of service at the end of his current term on 31 December 2008. He expressed profound gratitude to all who had sought to encourage him in recent days, and urged them now to support his decision. After considerable discussion the central committee received, with regret, the decision of the general secretary not to seek a second term and expressed its gratitude for all he had contributed to the work of the Council. During the discussions a significant number of the central committee expressed disquiet concerning the lack of information shared with them in the process of coming to a mind about how to respond to Dr Kobia's decision. A significant number of members expressed support for Dr Kobia's response to crisis situations around the world and gratitude for his visits to the regions. The central committee went on to instruct the executive committee "to create a working group on governance, accountability and staff policy."

In reviewing these events in detail we have learnt things about the particular process concerning the possible extension of the term of office of the general secretary, but also, more generally, about the weaknesses in the Rules and procedures of the Council itself. Some of these we note had already been identified by the executive committee and the central committee.

We recognize that under the complex and totally unexpected series of events, mistakes and misjudgements may have been made in the process of considering the extension of the contract of Dr Sam Kobia. There is no doubt about the commitment of the general secretary, the moderator and vice-moderators, and other leaders to the ecumenical movement. All have acted believing that their actions were taken in the best interest of the World Council of Churches. We recognize the difficulty that confidentiality raises in a process of making an assessment for such high office when not all matters are appropriate for sharing. We make the following comments on the process in the hope that new procedures may be put in place within the Rules of the WCC for guidance in the future.

- In any international organisation those involved in governance and as staff come from different contexts and bring with them differing expectations about how processes work. It is, therefore, of great importance that details about processes, in particular for appointing staff and for extensions of contracts, are clearly stated in the rules of the organisation and easily understood by all.
- Communicating across continents is not always a simple or swift matter even in this age of internet access (e-mails are sometimes not received; postal mail is sometimes late etc…). Care, therefore, needs to be taken to ensure all understand the processes being followed, what their particular role in the process is, that the time lines involved are adequate, and that structures of accountability in the process are clear.
- In the case of the WCC there is the need to be clear about the relation between the staff and those involved in governance – the officers and the executive and central committees. The staff, the officers and the governing bodies need to understand the processes relating to staffing appointments or extension of contracts. The presidents, the officers, the central committee and the executive committee need to understand their particular responsibilities and the time lines involved in any particular appointment or extension of contract under review. Each body needs to be given the appropriate information for making the decision it is asked to take. This requires adequate briefing of new officers and members of the executive and central committees after each assembly. All institutions tend to suffer from a loss of continuing memory, and the WCC is no exception.
- In evaluating the performance of Dr Sam Kobia for consideration of the extension of his contract, we observed that it was not helpful that there are no existing guidelines or structures of accountability in place for the monitoring or assessing of the performance of a general secretary. Historically, there have not been adequate guidelines relating to salary and benefits, travel and expenses, and procedures for claiming expenses back. Current fiscal practice, however, requires a new level of accountability in all organisations. To whom is a general secretary accountable? Who is it that should do on-going appraisals? Should it be the moderator of the central committee or the moderator together with the vice-moderators? To whom should their appraisal be communicated? What personal support mechanisms are there in place for a general secretary and to whom should a general secretary turn for more pastoral guidance and care? The WCC Constitution says that the general secretary is Chief Executive Officer of the WCC and Head of Staff. As an officer of the Council, the general secretary is accountable to the central committee. But it is not possible for a general secretary to report to such a body for ongoing oversight of his/her work. We note that work is currently being done on guidelines and control mechanisms and more detailed staff rules. We regard this as an urgent task which should include examining policies and procedures of other comparable non-governmental organisations.
- Because of the lack of guidelines for contract renewal the process of evaluation in the case of Dr Kobia may have omitted some strategic performance factors (e.g. administrative skills, communication skills, relationships with the churches, relations with ecumenical funding agencies or Specialised Ministries, decisions taken

concerning ACT Development, relations with Christian World Communions, the overall financial success of the Council, the strengthening of relations of member churches, and the relations with boards and staff.) What weight should be placed on these various areas of a general secretary's responsibilities? It is clear that no one person can excel in all areas. The entire central committee should be included in the evaluation process.

- We in the WCC, a large multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-ecclesial organisation can find ourselves trapped in "a tyranny of time." In this instance the leadership was not able to slow down the process during the meeting of the central committee. In the future we should ensure that judgements are not made under too much pressure of time. Such decisions should not be made at meetings that go late into the night. Adequate time needs to be taken to allow for the fact that many are not working in their first language and time for meditation and prayer should be taken. It may be that more than the space of nine months is required for a process that involves such widespread consultation.

**Towards reconciliation and healing within the fellowship of the WCC**

The task given to the presidents speaks about bringing about "truth, reconciliation and healing" within the fellowship of the WCC. Reconciliation and healing can only come when we concentrate on what is right and wrong, what is justice and injustice.

Whatever decisions are taken about the best way forward, or the introduction of clearer guidelines for the future, we are aware that many people have been hurt in the recent process. Even things done with the best intentions have sometimes had hurtful consequences for others. This has resulted in a breakdown of mutual trust and the development of a culture of suspicion. All too readily, unjust accusations have been made and situations have been too easily interpreted as a division between north and south. Staff have felt they have not been kept informed and have feared the growth of a "culture of investigation."

The central committee was right to emphasize the need for repentance, reconciliation and healing. Seeking reconciliation and healing is not an optional extra for those who seek to follow Christ and a Gospel of reconciliation. We recommend that the way of reconciliation be followed from now on with a renewal of our attitudes to one another, a willingness to think the best of one another, and a determination to rebuild trust. Reconciliation requires a readiness to listen to how events have been experienced by others and to the hurt they have received. We note that the Special Commission modelled a way of deep listening to the concerns of the Orthodox which led to a more confident living together in the fellowship of Churches.

The process of reconciliation and healing includes self criticism, repentance, prayer and forgiveness. This must occur among the presidents, the officers, the central committee, the executive committee and the staff. Only when we are all given to reconciliation and healing of broken and damaged relations shall we, as the privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement, be fit to serve the one ecumenical movement – only the reconciled can become agents of reconciliation in the churches and in the world. We suggest that for

any process of reconciliation and healing we need a deep spirituality to help us through our differences and conflicts. (cf 2 Cor 5:17-20)

**Recommendations for the future**

We offer the following suggestions for the future:

- Greater clarity needs to be agreed upon concerning the appropriate division of responsibilities between governance and management within the WCC.
- There is nothing in the Constitution or Rules that sets out the role of moderator or vice-moderators of the central committee. The respective tasks and responsibilities of the moderator and vice-moderators and their relation to the general secretary should be clearly delineated and set out in the Rules of the WCC. The specific role of the moderator and the joint responsibility and close cooperation of the moderator with the vice-moderators must be addressed.
- The executive committee needs to be helped to understand the processes it is responsible for and for there to be greater transparency in the difficult items on the agenda. Similarly, the central committee needs to be given sufficient information to make judgements it is called upon to make. It is all too easy to assume that processes are fully understood and that people have all the relevant information they require to make decisions.
- The relationship between the moderator and the general secretary needs to be made more explicit (cf. Rule XII.2). To whom is the general secretary responsible and how should he/she be held accountable, for example, in matters of finance and travel? A system of appraisal by appropriate person/s needs to be set in place.
- There needs to be a review of the internal mechanisms of financial controls for all staff, including for the general secretary, with clear lines of accountability for expenditure and stronger mechanisms of financial control.
- The role of moderators of committees of the central committee, especially in the period between central committee meetings, needs to be clarified. There needs to be a clear understanding of the relation of moderators of the various commissions and consultative bodies of the Council to the staff and the lines of communication that should be followed when information is sought about any particular staff member. This should only be done with the knowledge of the general secretary. In the case of the general secretary, the procedure should be spelled out in conjunction with the questions raised above, and attention should be given to the legal issues involved.
- There needs to be a review made of the processes of evaluation of requests for development programmes by all members of staff, including the general secretary. When all staff undertake a process of training this needs to be reviewed at regular intervals by accepted procedures.
- There need to be guidelines in the rules of the WCC for both the process and the time line for reviewing the extension of a contract of a general secretary and clear guidance on proper process.

- In any staff appointment, including that of the general secretary, or any discussion of an extension of contract, the relationship between the role of the executive committee and the central committee should be clearly understood. The central committee, as well as the executive committee, should have sufficient information in order to make an informed judgement.
- It may be that now is the time for there to be a review of the governance structures of the WCC, with someone from outside the WCC acting as an adviser. We welcome the decision of the central committee "to create a working group on governance, accountability and staff policy."
- The presidents are elected by the assembly as presidents and not as honorary presidents. There is nothing in the Rules that sets out the concrete tasks in the structure for the presidents. What is the relation of the presidents to the moderator and vice-moderators of the central committee and what is their role in relationship to the central and executive committees? Until Harare, the presidents were members of the executive committee. Since the role of the presidents is at times to take on a special task for the central committee then this should be set down in the rules of the WCC.

We believe that if the above suggestions and recommendations are addressed, the Council may in future avoid some of the confusion of the last months. We believe it necessary to strengthen the Constitution and Rules in the ways we have indicated. It is vital for the one ecumenical movement that a World Council of Churches is enabled to function securely and confidently. It is also important that there are good relationships between the staff and the officers and members of the governing bodies, based on confidence, transparency and trust.

We offer these reflections aware of the responsibility that the central committee entrusted to us. It is our prayer that the process of reconciliation and healing that we believe we have already been a part of will continue in the life of the executive committee and the central committee.

**A possible way forward**

The central committee has taken the decision to accept the wish of the general secretary not to seek an extension of his contract. We, the presidents, note from the minutes of the closed session of the executive committee that there was a recommendation "to extend the contract of the Reverend Dr Samuel Kobia to serve as general secretary until such time as a new general secretary has been elected and taken office." (cf. executive committee minutes of February 2008, section 13.4) In the context of our report, to assist reconciliation and healing within the fellowship of the WCC, the presidents see this as a possible way forward.

*Triune God,*
*illuminate our mind, strengthen our will*
*to do always your will, not ours.*
*Give us your grace to work firmly for*
*justice, reconciliation and peace,*
*for your glory.*
*Amen*

Archbishop (Prof. Dr) Anastasios of Tirana, Durres, Primate of Albania
Mr John Doom
Pasteur Simon K. Dossou
Dr Soritua Albert Ernst Nababan
Rev. Dr Ofelia Ortega Suarez
Aba Paulos I, Patriarch of Ethiopia
Rev. Dr Bernice Powell Jackson
Dame Mary Tanner

## 23 Appendix IV – Update on the Assembly Discernment Process

What follows is an update on the assembly discernment process, with particular attention to establishing and preparing the work of the assembly discernment committee (ADC) as per the mandate given by the central committee when it met in February 2008 (cf. report of the policy reference committee and the report of the nominations committee).

**An update on ADC membership**

The central committee nominated the following members to serve on the committee:

Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima, Turkey, Orthodox (Eastern) – Moderator
Bishop Youannes, Africa, Egypt, Orthodox (Oriental)
Ms Iyabo Oyekola, Africa, Nigeria, African Instituted, youth
Ms Alison Jane Preston, Asia, Australia, Anglican, youth
Bishop Isaac Mar Philoxenos, Asia, India, Mar Thoma
Rev. Dr Paul Gardner, Caribbean, Jamaica, Free (Moravian)
Rev. Heike Bosien, Europe, Germany, Lutheran
Rev. Dr Michael Tita, Europe, Romania, Orthodox (Eastern)
Mr Graham McGeoch, Europe, United Kingdom, Reformed, youth
Dr Nora Bayrakdarian-Kabakian, Middle East, Lebanon, Orthodox (Oriental)
Rev. John Thomas, North America, USA, United
Ms Anne Glynn Mackoul, North America, USA, Orthodox (Eastern)
Dr Magali Nascimento Cunha, Latin America, Brazil, Methodist
Miss Geraldine Varea, Pacific, Fiji, Methodist, youth

The central committee requested the general secretary to invite nominations from Christian world communions (CWC), national councils of churches (NCC), regional ecumenical organizations (REO), specialized ministries (SM), international ecumenical organizations (IEO), the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Pentecostal churches and the Global Christian Forum (GCF). The following nominations were received as of 1 September 2008:

CWC – Rev. Canon Gregory Cameron, Anglican Communion
CWC – Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko, Lutheran World Federation
CWC – Rev. Dr Douwe Visser, World Alliance of Reformed Churches (observer)
REO – Metr. George Saliba, Middle East Council of Churches
NCC – Dr Peter Bouteneff, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA
NCC – Rev. Dr Vuyani Vellem, South African Council of Churches

SM – Rev. Jorge Domingues, General Board of Global Ministries – United Methodist Church
SM – Mrs Kirsten Lund Larsen, DanChurchAid
IEO – Ms Necta Montes Rocas, World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)
RCC – Dr Fr Gosbert Byamanungu, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
RCC – Sister Monica Joseph, Congregation of Gesu-Maria
GCF – Rev. Dr Wonsuk Ma, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

The following nominations of representatives are pending as of 1 September 2008:

REO – Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI)
IEO – Syndesmos
Pentecostal churches
CWC – Baptist World Alliance (observers)

The process of securing nominations from ecumenical partners was facilitated by opportunities to consult with the general secretaries of REOs at their gathering in April, the conference of secretaries of CWCs at their steering committee meeting in May and the WCC round table core group at their meeting in May.

Further feedback was sought from the WCC officers during their meeting in May. The officers accepted the friendly request of the CWCs to nominate two members and two observers. The CWCs cited their various levels of interest and mandates in pursuing this discussion with the WCC as the reason to request additional presence. The WCC officers also accepted a proposal to solicit nominations from specific REOs and NCCs and to solicit IEO nominations from Syndesmos and the WSCF.

**An update on preparations**

The ADC is expected to report to the central committee in September 2009. The envisioned timeline for its work is as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| November 2008 | First meeting of the ADC in Geneva (4-7 November) |
| December 2008 | Report on the first meeting to be shared with the WCC officers |
| February 2009 | Report to the executive committee for discussion and feedback to the ADC |
| April 2009 | Second meeting of the ADC to produce a second report |
| May 2009 | Second report to be shared with the WCC officers |
| July 2009 | Report to be finalized |
| September 2009 | Final report to the executive committee for presentation to the central committee |

Preparations for the work of the ADC are being developed under the leadership of Metropolitan Gennadios, ADC moderator, and with the support of a mixed staff group.

The first ADC meeting on 4 to 7 November will be held at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. The registration process was launched in August. The first meeting will seek to respond to the concerns that have been raised by member churches and ecumenical partners in the listening process. It will begin to explore the feasibility of providing expanded space for Christian world communions (CWCs) and of fostering the participation of other ecumenical partners, church groups and non-member churches in the

service of Christian unity and common witness to the world. Clarity is needed how the next WCC assembly might provide ample space to contribute to 1) deepening the fellowship of WCC member churches, 2) broadening participation in the fellowship of WCC member churches and 3) maintaining the coherence of the one ecumenical movement.

**An update on the ongoing listening process**

The central committee also requested that the process of listening to member churches should continue. The permanent committee on consensus and collaboration, when it met in June, reiterated the need to solicit more feedback from member churches.

The general secretary wrote to all central committee members asking them to assist in securing feedback from their respective member churches. Responses have begun to arrive although not in significant numbers. Does a lack of response suggest that the call for an expanded space at the next WCC assembly reflects more of an institutional agenda and is not so much a vital concern for member churches or that the still existing un-clarity regarding the purpose and character of expanded space makes it difficult to engage with the issue?

Among the primary concerns raised by WCC member churches is the need to ensure the integrity of the next WCC assembly as a unique gathering of member churches in prayerful deliberation according to the ethos of fellowship and consensus.

**Need for clarity**

The Common Understanding and Vision process identified three essential dimensions of service to Christian unity and common witness by the member churches of the WCC:

- deepening of the fellowship of member churches
- broadening participation in the ecumenical movement and
- maintaining the coherence among ecumenical partners

These dimensions express the unique role of the WCC as a fellowship of churches in their pursuit of visible unity and a common witness not only among themselves but in partnership with other actors in the ecumenical movement. These three dimensions are inter-related and need to be held together in a constructive relationship.

The report of the policy reference committee of the 2008 central committee states:

> The PRC devoted significant time to discussion on proposals for the next assembly in 2013, aware of the need for greater clarity of how the three dimensions of deepening of the fellowship of churches, the broadening participation in the ecumenical movement and ensuring greater coherence among ecumenical partners can be held in constructive relationship, whilst maintaining the ethos of fellowship and consensus.

The report continues:

> The PRC underlines the importance of the distinction of the vision of an "expanded assembly" on the one hand, and steps towards "an expanded space" on the other hand. The term "expanded space", however, is understood in different ways. Some emphasize its role for the broadening of participation, others for ensuring greater

coherence, still others understand its role in deepening existing relationships among the member churches. These different perspectives need to remain clear, but also inter-related, hence the need for a discernment committee.

The report points to the different ways in which language is used and understood. The same differences surfaced in the "listening process" initiated by the central committee seeking reactions to the 2006 Assembly recommendations concerning the next WCC assembly.

Alongside common prayer, Bible study, plenary sessions, committee work and decision making sessions, WCC assemblies have always included times for regional and confessional meetings. Assemblies have always welcomed ecumenical partners and visitors. More recent assemblies offered more intentionally structured participation in the form of "padares" (1998) and "mutirão" workshops (2006).

What is the purpose to provide expanded space beyond these elements of recent assemblies?

The "listening process" that was initiated after the assembly revealed that expectations among member churches differ:

Focusing on the deepening of the fellowship, many want to build on and further develop the fruits of 60 years of the pursuit of Christian unity and a common witness to the world by the member churches through their council. They highlight the relationships of mutual accountability in this fellowship and emphasize the value of recent achievements, i.e. the introduction of consensus procedures as expression of an underlying ethos of consensus. Expanded space could be used for deeper theological and spiritual encounter concerning the search for unity and common witness by representatives of member churches both within and between different Christian traditions. For others, this would not give sufficient recognition to the diversity of organizational expressions of the ecumenical movement and the need to foster their cooperation and shared sense of purpose and vision. While they underline the need to broaden and strengthen participation among member churches and ecumenical partners, they also recognize that there is the need to deepen these relationships in the ethos of fellowship and consensus.

Emphasizing the broadening of participation, some think of churches that are not members of the WCC, especially Pentecostal and charismatic churches. This family of churches has, for many reasons, stayed outside of the ecumenical movement. But new relationships are developing. Like the world mission conference in Athens, the assembly could become a place for mutual encounter. Others ask in view of such a proposal what the difference would be between expanded space at the assembly and the Global Christian Forum (GCF), which provides a broad platform for churches from all different Christian traditions. The GCF is the broadest platform on which Christian churches have met so far. While it is an instrument to broaden participation, it does not address the two other dimensions.

The broadening of participation and greater inclusiveness are also motivations for some to think of a kind of global "Kirchentag" that would precede the WCC assembly as a gathering of churches, ecumenical partners, and groups that identify with the ecumenical movement. Such a gathering would demonstrate the vitality of the wider ecumenical

movement and help the assembly to address relevant contemporary concerns. Again others are warning that an event of such a wide scope could undermine the identity of the WCC as a fellowship of churches, would not establish the level of mutual accountability that is essential for the fellowship, and could be counterproductive to focusing the mandate and agenda of the WCC.

Those putting the emphasis on greater coherence of the ecumenical movement, want to foster cooperation and synergies between different ecumenical organizations and the WCC, especially with Christian world communions, but also with regional ecumenical organizations and others. Some ask if the Faith and Order Forum on Bilateral dialogues can serve as an instructive example for structuring the relationship between bilateral and multilateral and thus also between confessional and conciliar ecumenism? When the question is raised if expanded space can also offer opportunities for decision making of those bodies in the context of the next WCC assembly, many others are concerned that this could jeopardize the integrity of the decision making process of both the WCC and these other organizations.

Two concerns have been very clearly articulated:

1. The importance not to confuse the decision making processes of different bodies. This was articulated by the by the central committee in 2008 in the PRC report asking the ADC:

   "to maintain a clear distinction between the governance aspects of the assembly on the one hand, primarily for the WCC but also for the CWCs and confessional families should they choose to use the "expanded space" provided in the assembly for their own governance purposes, and the celebratory and encounter elements of the assembly on the other hand."

2. The urgent plea not to jeopardize the fruits of the special commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC – even when following the ethos of consensus – and not to marginalize the representation of Orthodox churches in moving towards an expanded space.

Given these concerns, clarity is needed if it is feasible to provide expanded space at the next assembly. How do the different expectations and goals relate to each other? Are they mutually exclusive or can at least some of them not only be compatible with each other, but mutually supportive? Can they be seen as different steps in a process that has even some analogy with the liturgy?

It was the vision of the WCC when it was founded 60 years ago not only to unite the member churches in one fellowship, but also to bring together the Faith and Order and the Life and Work movements, and later International Missionary Council, into one ecumenical movement. It has been a major achievement of the WCC to hold these movements and the churches together.

With new actors in the ecumenical movement, new churches seeking visible unity and new contextual challenges, the role of the WCC vis a vis the wider ecumenical movement calls for similar efforts to foster a constructive relationship between deepening the fellowship of mutually committed churches, broadening participation and maintaining coherence among those who are actively involved in the one ecumenical movement.

**Action by the executive committee**

The executive committee is asked:

- to receive the update on ADC membership, preparations and listening process, and
- to give further advice on how best to approach the task of the ADC and to interpret the term 'expanded space' in view of the role and function of the WCC for the member churches and the wider ecumenical movement.

## 24 Appendix V – Report of the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration

The permanent committee on consensus and collaboration (the "permanent committee"), held its second meeting at Hofgeismar, Germany 4-8 July 2008, hosted by Bishop Dr Martin Hermann Hein of the Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck, Germany at the Predigerseminar (Pastoral Seminary) Hofgeismar. The committee, comprised of fourteen members, continues the work of the special commission on Orthodox participation in the WCC (the "Special Commission").

**Participants**

Co-moderated by Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi of the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi, the meeting was attended by members Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church in Kenya), Bishop Samuel Robert Azariah (Church of Pakistan), H.E. Metropolitan Bishoy (Coptic Orthodox Church), Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul (Patriarchate of Antioch), Bishop Dr Martin Hermann Hein (Evangelical Church in Germany), Dr Nigussu Legesse (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church), Rev. Graham Gerald McGeoch (Church of Scotland), Dr Magali Nascimento Cunha (Methodist Church in Brazil), and Rev. Dr Sharon Watkins (General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)), as well as Rev. Archpriest Mikhail Gundyaev substituting for H.G. Bishop Dr Hilarion Alfeyev (Russian Orthodox Church), and Rev. Archpriest Vladan Perisic, substituting for H.G. Bishop Irinej of Australia and New Zealand (Serbian Orthodox Church). Apologies were received from H.E. Metropolitan Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church). The committee welcomed guests for the opening session Hon Rev. Dr Ofelia Ortega-Suarez, a president of the WCC and Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser, formerly general secretary of the WCC. The work of the committee was facilitated by WCC staff Mr Georges Lemopoulos, Rev. Sabine Udodesku, and the Reverend Canon Dr John Gibaut, director of Faith and Order.

**Setting**

The permanent committee appreciated very much the congenial location for its second full meeting at the Evangelisches Predigerseminar Hofgeismar. The committee was impressed with the expression of faith, hope and love represented by the work of the seminary, the senior living centre and the other ministries of the Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck. Joining in praise and prayer with the vital congregation at Christus-Kirche in Kassel, and being received by government leaders in the states of Hesse and Thuringia, provided a welcomed interaction with the local community. Walking in the footsteps of

Martin Luther (1483-1546) and of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231) at the Wartburg Castle afforded the possibility to recall this significant period in Reformation history and to become better acquainted with a saint whose life is an example to all Christians. The committee was grateful for the thoughtful planning of this meaningful encounter and the generous hospitality throughout the days of our meeting.

**Background**

The committee heard from the Living Letters/Decade to Overcome Violence visit to Germany involving members of the committee and staff, which immediately preceded this session of the permanent committee. Their reports included stories of the struggles to reunify a country after decades of division, to heal wounds that in some places are hardly even acknowledged, and to reconcile after violence in the home, the family, and the nation. Hofgeismar's location adjacent to the old border between West and East Germany, the reports from the Living Letters' visits and from members of the permanent committee from their varied church contexts from Africa, Asia, the Balkans, Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America, all provided context for the committee's discussions, and included stories of hope and reconciliation from troubled areas, as well as challenges to the churches in others. The committee was reminded that the social and political contexts in which Christians live have evolved with very different ways of responding to social, ethical and justice issues. The stark image of memorials marking the suffering and death from religious, national and ideological wars described by the Living Letters team offered a sobering reminder of the need for dialogue and reconciliation.

**Agenda**

The work of the permanent committee for this second meeting focused on matters identified during the 2007 Damascus meeting and areas of continued concern in the life of the Council, including matters receiving particular attention in the report of the policy reference committee of the central committee, such as, (a) expanded space – 10th Assembly, (b) programme plans 2009-2013, (c) progress on consensus matters, and (d) ecclesiology.

A significant portion of the meeting focused on the work of the Faith and Order Commission and in particular its reflections on Ecclesiology and Ethics. Reverend Canon Dr John Gibaut, Director of the Faith and Order Commission, was present at the invitation of the permanent committee, in order to discuss synergies between the mandates of the permanent committee and the Faith and Order Commission.

**10th Assembly**

The permanent committee reviewed the composition and mandate of the assembly discernment committee as included in the adopted report of the policy reference committee to the 2008 WCC central committee (cf. 2008 central committee minutes, section 12), noting in particular that the narrative section of that report lifted up the need to assure that the ethos of fellowship and consensus be maintained as fundamental to any proposal for the 2013 Assembly.

The permanent committee noted that the assembly discernment committee is accountable to the central committee, and therefore, the next assembly, in whatever form is decided, fundamentally will be an assembly of the churches in fellowship through the WCC. The

earlier request [date] to the member churches from the general secretariat for responses to the proposal for "expanded space" for ecumenical partners at the next assembly, or an "expanded assembly," has received little response from the member churches. The assembly discernment committee has been directed to continue the process of "listening" to the member churches. The permanent committee has identified the need to elicit aggressively additional reactions from the churches to this proposal so that sufficient information is available to the assembly discernment committee prior to undertaking its work, and also so that ecumenical partners are not surprised by responses first received at the next meeting of the central committee.

The permanent committee recognized that "expanded space" for ecumenical partners at the next assembly, or an "expanded assembly," could put at risk the achievements of the special commission and its successor committees, particularly by exacerbating the dynamics experienced by the Orthodox churches, which are few in numbers in the fellowship of the WCC membership and do not figure at all in most of the ecumenical organizations which may be interested in participating in an expanded assembly (e.g. CWCs, Specialized Ministries and most of the REOs, NCCs, IEOs). While consensus process of governance and allocation of representation on governing bodies have eased the impact of this situation, the structural minority status is not fully mitigated by adjusting modes of governance in the WCC and could be overwhelming to effective Orthodox participation in an expanded form of assembly.

It was noted that the Global Christian Forum (GCF) was a successful experience of expanded space outside of the current structure of the WCC. It is understood that a representative of the GCF will participate in the meeting of the assembly discernment committee.

**Programme plans 2009-2013**

The permanent committee was provided with a very helpful overview prepared by deputy general secretary Georges Lemopoulos entitled "Reading the WCC Programme Plans from an Orthodox Perspective" that classified Orthodox Church engagement in various areas and also posed some fundamental questions that transcend specific programmatic activities. (Report attached.) The overview noted that there are areas of rather good, or at least satisfactory levels of Orthodox participation, but also many areas of concern regarding Orthodox participation or lack of response. There seems to be a corollary tendency on the part of the WCC and ecumenical partners to discount the importance of maintaining Orthodox involvement and profile when the Orthodox Churches themselves choose not to participate or respond. For instance, if the pattern continues of creating organizations (such as EAA, ACT, ACT Development) that are related to WCC work but not fully of the WCC – and hence do not include the Orthodox or account for Orthodox concerns – this tendency will be exacerbated.

**Progress report on consensus**

The committee received a report of the efforts since 2003 to implement the consensus model of decision-making presented by committee member Anne Glynn-Mackoul. The report included a survey of opportunities provided to train the moderators, recorders and rapporteurs in this new model of meeting, and an assessment of efforts in these areas that

still need to take place. The committee affirmed this assessment, and also noted that as the WCC has been living into this new model, it has encountered deeper layers of meaning in the consensus process than simply institutional changes in the conduct of meetings (such as moderating sessions and recording decisions). Rather, the Council has begun to experience the profoundly spiritual changes possible for its work if it fully embraces the consensus model, and works to transform the culture of the WCC in all of its expressions into a culture of consensus.

The report of the special commission itself anticipated that the change in ethos of the Council would need to go beyond rules, training and technical aspects. Consensus is more conciliar than parliamentary and more inclusive than adversarial. The emphasis on decision-making serves an institutional logic, the consensus method, as an effort to build the "common mind" aims at strengthening the fellowship. Even in cases of "business" matters, the consensus method points to the possibility for churches to express their faith which also is "made effective through love" (Gal 5:6). (cf. Report of the Special Commission, Appendix B.)

The committee noted in its 2007 Damascus report that "the challenges of this significant change in the culture of the WCC may require additional adjustments as well, including attention to planning the schedule of meetings to allow sufficient time for consensus to develop around issues that may be on the agenda of a meeting, and sufficient time for the drafting of statements and reports that allow consensus to develop around a text." Recent meetings reinforce the importance of this observation.

**Introduction to the programmatic work of the Faith and Order Commission**

Over the course of several sessions, the committee listened to a thoughtful and thorough presentation by the director of Faith and Order introducing the work of the commission in a number of important areas. (See report attached.) The director reported on:

- the substantial Orthodox participation in the leadership of Faith and Order,
- progress in the area of ethics (in particular the study on moral discernment),
- sources of authority: Tradition and Traditions
- involvement of Faith and Order in facilitating the communication among bilateral ecumenical dialogues and the united and uniting churches convocation
- work with Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- involvement with Common Witness regarding holy women and men
- substantial work on the question of the One Baptism: Towards Mutual Recognition
- ongoing consultation on the matter of particular interest to the permanent committee: ecclesiology. In particular, Canon Gibaut reviewed the process of reception to the two documents, "The Nature and Mission of the Church," and "Called to Be the One Church."

A rich and stimulating discussion followed.

**Baptism**

On the subject of baptism, the permanent committee noted that the very fact of pressing the ecclesiological questions has led to renewed discussion in the area of baptism. Old questions are being raised with new vigour: Is baptism needed for salvation? Is baptism by

water and spirit or by word and spirit? The theological background of mutual acceptance of baptism deserves renewed discussion in our time.

The committee was reminded that agreements on recognition of baptism are being reached already in certain national and regional contexts. An example of such an agreement in April 2007 among different Christian churches in Germany was mentioned in particular ("Magdeburg Agreement"). It was noted that research has been undertaken (although not published) to ascertain the number and content of such agreements worldwide. A concern was expressed that in the global ecumenical movement we may reproduce work unnecessarily. On the other hand, sometimes issues such as baptism and ecclesiology are not addressed at all because they seem so distant to matters of war and peace, justice and injustice, requiring the immediate attention of churches.

The committee observed that there is a need to continue to harvest information on both theological reflection and practice in churches and in national and regional contexts on questions of baptism as well as the nature and mission of the church.

**Ecclesiology**

The committee conducted an extended conversation on the relationship between the work of Faith and Order and the permanent committee in the area of ecclesiology. Canon Gibaut framed the conversation by noting the important contribution of Orthodox scholarship and theology, which roots the discussion in Eucharistic theology and eschatology. The current mechanism for Council-wide discussion of ecclesiology, however, is the response process on the two documents, "Nature and Mission of the Church" and "Called to be the One Church." The committee noted with some disappointment the low number of responses to date and gave serious consideration to what might be the reasons and how to encourage additional interest.

The challenges in offering theological studies for the consideration of the churches include the differing priorities faced by member churches in their local contexts and ecumenical organizations. To the extent that enthusiasm exists for documents such as "The Nature and Mission of the Church", and "Called to be the One Church", it may be helpful to the process of reception and response by member churches that those engaged with the document undertake the personal task of eliciting response, an approach that marked the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" process and was particularly effective.

**Changing ecumenical landscape**

The committee noted the very different ecumenical landscape that marks the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries. The ecumenical movement, which was originated to overcome the fragmentation of the Christian churches, has itself become fragmented and is subject to centrifugal forces that reflect the era. For instance, it was noted, with relationship to the united and uniting churches, that the zeal that once characterized that movement has waned significantly. The WCC continues to hold two primary objectives: to accompany the churches in calling one another to visible unity and to offer coherence to the ecumenical movement. The challenges of the era only strengthen our resolve to seek that unity for which Our Lord prayed.

**Next meeting**

The permanent committee has tentatively reserved dates for its next meeting, with arrival anticipated on 1 July 2009, with an opening session in the evening and departure on 5 July 2009, with consideration to be given to appropriate planning for the development of its report and recommendations. The agenda will focus on common prayer and the midterm evaluation, and include discussion on moral and ethical issues from the perspective of the report of the special commission.

**The permanent committee on consensus and collaboration recommends:**

- That an urgent reminder be sent to member churches who have not yet responded to the proposal for "expanded space" for the 2013 Assembly or an "expanded assembly", urging them to respond by 1 November 2008. This renewed call should be by letter from the general secretary to the member churches and by email to the central committee members, and by web posting. It should also be included in the summary of issues to the central committee following the next meeting of the executive committee.
- That the mandate of the midterm evaluation committee include evaluation of the WCC's progress in implementing the main findings of the special commission and that the team be invited to attend the next meeting of the permanent committee.
- That all efforts be undertaken to facilitate the deepening of the Council's embrace of the consensus model, transforming the culture of the WCC in all of its expressions into a culture of consensus. To this end, the committee restates here by reference recommendation 6 from the 2007 Damascus report of the permanent committee[1] emphasizing the additional levels of training and reflection necessary to this process. The general secretariat is encouraged to undertake more intentional efforts in (a) consulting with member churches or ecumenical organizations that use consensus, (b) providing some consensus orientation in the planning of all meetings of the WCC to assure that the consensus methods are fully established as the default model for all phases of meetings, and (c) orienting and training current WCC staff and new staff at the time of their employment in the consensus model.
- That the permanent committee and the Faith and Order secretariat continue the close collaboration that marked the work of the special commission on matters of common interest and concern particularly ecclesiology, with special attention to issues identified by the special commission (cf. report of the special commission paragraphs 14, 15 and 16). The permanent committee would draw the attention of the Faith and

---

[1] 6. affirms the intention to train the leadership of WCC (officers, moderators of committees and commissions) on consensus procedures and urges the consideration of similar training for rapporteurs, **recommends** that this training of the leadership and rapporteurs consist of intentional and ongoing training and evaluation, **recommends** that a presentation on consensus decision-making to participants of major ecumenical meetings of the WCC be included very early in the agenda of such meetings, and **recommends** that the agendas of meetings be designed to facilitate discernment and development of consensus in the drafting of any report and statements.

Order Commission to these issues and asks for its help, putting these issues as much as possible into focus during its work.

- That the WCC continue to encourage member churches to respond to the two ecclesiological documents currently being circulated "Called to be the One Church" (Porto Alegre) and "The Nature and Mission of the Church" (Faith and Order), identifying the purpose that will be served by each document and the responses received. This encouragement should employ multiple approaches, including: (a) renew the invitation to the churches for responses; (b) engage centres of theological inquiry close to the ecumenical movement to undertake to respond; and (c) engage in regional consultations around the documents, also by inviting regular local or regional gatherings to include on their agendas consultation about these documents and the issues raised. Where necessary, efforts should be made to accompany member churches or build their capacity to respond.

# 25 Appendix VI – Toward a Working Group on Governance, Accountability and Staff Policy

During its February 2008 meeting, the central committee took three decisions (at three different moments, addressing three inter-related and yet somehow different issues) with regard to the Council's governance.

These decisions raise broader questions and challenges, which are simply listed here.

## 25.1 Recommendations of the central committee

### 25.1.1 Functions of the governing bodies

"To receive document *Gen 07 – 'Functions of the governing bodies'*, and to forward the comments to the executive committee for further deliberation. Additionally, the entire document will be acted upon in the next central committee meeting." (cf. February 2008 nominations committee report)

There were no explicit comments to the document (both prior to the central committee, when it was shared during the consensus training, and during the central committee, when it was submitted to the plenary). However, the following concerns were expressed at different instances and may need to be addressed at a level that goes beyond the "clarifications" offered by Doc Gen 07:

- More precision is needed with regard to the division of labour, role and authority of the executive and central committees (there are already some pending amendments on which the central committee did not take action)[2].
- More transparency is needed with regard to the division of labour between the programme subcommittee of the executive committee and the programme committee of the central committee.

[2] cf. CC February 2008, Doc Gen 06 rev 2.

- More clarity is needed with regard to the function and role of the programme committee itself (a matter on the agenda of the programme committee, as there have been various difficulties faced during the two first meetings of the committee).[3]
- The flow (of information, conceptual input, recommendations, decisions) between consultative bodies and the programme committee will also have to be made clearer.
- The distribution of tasks between the programme and the policy reference committees needs particular attention (particularly since the mandate of the policy reference committee is not spelled out in the rules).
- The mandate and role of the nominations committee of the central committee, as spelled out in the Rules does not seem to correspond to the real functions of the committee.[4]
- The mandate and role of the finance committee of the central committee seems to be gradually expanded (particularly with the inclusion of staff policy matters) so as to become de facto a "management" committee.[5]

### 25.1.2 Frequency of central committee meetings

"The central committee instructs the executive committee to consider the feasibility of a return to annual meetings of central committee, and if that proves inappropriate, to develop a reporting cycle for programmes, committees and commissions that is designed fully to match the 18 month pattern." (cf. February 2008 central committee minutes, section 9.3.4)

The Rules clearly state that the central committee "shall ordinarily meet once every year".[6] The eighteen-month cycle was adopted by the central committee because of financial considerations.[7]

If a return to the annual meetings proves impossible (again for financial reasons), it could be argued that the elaboration of a reporting cycle, suggested by this recommendation as an alternative solution, cannot solve a major difficulty: indeed, some of the above-mentioned underlying tensions (e.g. between the executive and central committees, or between the programme subcommittee of the executive committee and the programme committee of the central committee) have mostly their origins in the changing rhythm of central committee meetings, particularly as decisions have to be prepared and taken at different moments of the year by different governing bodies.

---

[3] cf. Report of the meeting of the core group of the programme committee and the leadership of the finance committee, Geneva, May 2008.

[4] cf. Constitution and Rules of the WCC, Rule VII.

[5] cf. Constitution and Rules of the WCC, Rule XI.

[6] Rule VI.3.a

[7] cf. Minutes of the central committee, 2001, p. 143.

Certainly, reporting in between executive committee meetings (regularly done by the general secretary) can keep central committee informed. The real issue however is **who** makes the decisions (particularly on programme policy) and **when** these decision are taken (with regard not only to the planning cycle, but also the requirements of the ecumenical partners for funding requests and reporting).

Therefore, as was already underlined, more clarity about "the division of labour, role and authority" of each body and transparent ways of delegation from one body to another might be needed.

### 25.1.3 Review of governance, accountability and staff policy

> "The central committee instructs the executive committee to create a working group on governance, accountability and staff policy" (February 2008 central committee minutes, section 14.3)

The decision was taken in a certain moment in the life of the institution and obviously aims at addressing issues that have surfaced during and around the circumstances of this particular moment. It does not explicitly refer to a revision of the Rules, neither does it give any indication about the range of the expected review.

Looking back, it could be argued that from Canberra to Harare (1991-1998) the emphasis was on incorporating into the Constitution and Rules of the WCC the outcome of the Common Understanding and Vision document (mainly article 3), while from Harare to Porto Alegre (1998-2006) the emphasis was on incorporating the findings of the Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC (particularly on membership; consensus decision making; the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration). There were no major modifications with regard to the governance structures.[8]

## 25.2 Suggestions from ecumenical partners

### 25.2.1 Two questions addressed to the Council

The constitution of a working group on governance could also offer the occasion to deal with fundamental questions raised by ecumenical partners, particularly in the framework of the reflection process on *ecumenism in the 21st century* and the role of the WCC within the broader ecumenical movement. Two of these questions might be:

- could membership/participation in the governing bodies of the WCC be extended beyond representation of member churches? The question refers to ecumenical organizations largely constituted by the member churches of the Council (e.g. Christian World Communions).
- could the governing bodies of the WCC be envisaged smaller, more flexible, adapted to the need of a modern management? What lessons could be learned from

[8] There have been central committee documents on staffing policy (in 1987 and in 1992), but they have not been incorporated into the Rules. cf. Minutes of the central committee meetings in 1987 and 1992.

ecumenical partners who have abandoned large, costly, and somehow "outdated" governance structures (e.g. the specialized ministries)?

One of the major tasks of the working group would be to identify such questions and challenges and address them properly.

### 25.2.2 A proposal from ecumenical partners

During the WCC round table (Geneva, May 2008) the leadership and representatives of the specialized ministries formulated the proposal that the working group on governance should also include representatives of the partners. Their argument is quite simple: since most of the recently established consultative bodies (e.g. Ecumenism in the 21st Century, assembly discernment committee, etc.) include representatives of partner ecumenical organizations, the working group on governance should follow the same pattern.

The response to this proposal will emerge as the executive committee will be discussing the character of the working group. If the latter will be composed exclusively of members of governing bodies, some ways of consultation with partners (including the specialized ministries) might be explored. If it will have an advisory character and, therefore, a broader membership, an active participation of the specialized ministries might be considered.

## 25.3 Suggested actions

The executive committee:

- *to define the nature and range of the task to be entrusted to the working group and prepare its terms of reference accordingly;*
- *to make preliminary proposals for the agenda and time-lines of the working group;*
- *to appoint the membership of the working group.*